

THE SMART SET

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THE HUSBANDS' COMEDY

By James Branch Cabell

Times are changed with him who marries; there are no more by-path meadows, where you may innocently linger, but the road lies long and straight and dusty to the grave. . . . Once you are married, there is nothing left for you, not even suicide, but to be good.—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

OLD LOVES AND OLD FACES

IT was she, beyond question. Rudolph Musgrave had anticipated this first sight of her in many varying fashions; beside the gallant chances he had vaguely dreamed of, the actual recognition seemed to have come about a little crudely. He had merely glanced up, in the most casual manner, and had discovered her—as he might have discovered any ordinary woman—in company with Alicia Wade, in the second box from the stage of the Lyric Theatre. Destiny had managed the affair rather shabbily.

They had arrived late. Yes, they must have come in while the lights were lowered for the first act. There were some men with them—probably, some of Alicia's men. At least, they were both of the callow and chinless sort that usually fluttered about her in public places—of the sort that makes life endurable for many women who have entered, under protest, into their forties.

One had a good view of all four of them from the orchestra. One could see that she was little altered. One could see that time had merely added poise and self-possession and a certain opulence to the beauty that had caused one's voice to play fantastic tricks in conference with Anne Willoughby—ancient, unforgotten conferences, wherein one had pointed out the

many respects in which she differed from all other women, and the perfect feasibility of marrying on nothing a year.

"Oh, man, man!" said Mr. Musgrave, in his soul, "what's the good of raking up all that! I tell you, that was all over years ago! It's over, it's dead, it's buried! I tell you, don't think of that; think of something sensible! Think of how much six times seven is! Think of—oh, think of anything but that! That isn't Anne Willoughby yonder, you ass; that's Mrs. John Charteris—she's the wife of the fellow that writes those decayed books. She's been abroad with her husband for years. She's an old friend of yours—nothing more. You're going to see her again in three days at the Stanhopes' house-party; your wife's going to be there; her husband's going to be there. You're going to tell her how happy your wife makes you, and what a fine boy you've got. You're going to tell her how much you admire her husband's books. No, you aren't going to talk about anything else. Meanwhile, you aren't the fellow in 'Aux Italiens,' you know, even if you have run across a girl you used to admire, in a theatre; you aren't bothered by the faint, sweet smell of any foolish jasmine-flower, you understand, or by any equally foolish hankerings after your lost youth. You're simply a commonplace, every-day sort of a mar-

ried man, and you're feeling a bit pulled down to-night, because your liver or something is out of sorts. And you didn't come here to behave like an ass, but to see a play. Now, you're going to see that play. You're going to pay particular attention to it."

Thereupon, the curtain rose upon the second act, and he settled back in his seat.

The comedy was ridiculously overrated. The acting was preposterous. And the ingénue, who had just stolen out to meet a painfully mature *jeune premier* in a rather pretty forest-setting—how gross and raddle-faced and utterly unlike—! Mr. Musgrave cleared his throat, and turned his eyes firmly toward the stage. Still, it was really out of all reason to call that woman beautiful, or her acting natural. In real life, for instance, a girl would have—

Mr. Musgrave decided that, after all, so poor a play was not worthy of his attention. In the grateful gloom of the theatre, he turned his eyes very frankly toward a certain box, and considered divers matters that had taken place quite long enough ago to have been forgotten.

It was a foolish sort of reverie, and scarcely worth the setting down. It was a reverie of the kind that every one, and especially every one's wife, admits to be mawkish and unprofitable; and yet, somehow, the next still Summer night, or long, sleepy Sunday afternoon, or, perhaps, some cheap, jigging, heart-breaking tune, will set a medley of old loves and old faces whirling in the brain. One grows very sad over it, of course, and it becomes very apparent that one has always been ill-treated by the world; but the sadness is not unpleasant, and one is quite willing to forgive.

Yes—it was a long, long time ago. It must have been a great number of centuries. Fairhaven—quaint, old-world Fairhaven—was decked in its Spring fripperies of burgeoning, and the sky was a great, pale turquoise, and the buttercups left a golden dust

high up on one's trousers. One had not become entirely accustomed to long trousers then, and one was rather proud of them. One was lying on one's back in the woods, where the birds were astir and eager to begin their house-building, and twittered hysterically over the pregnant possibilities of straws and broken twigs; overhead, the swollen buds of the trees stood out against the sky, and the branches were like grotesque designs on a Japanese plate; there was a little clump of arbutus that just brushed one's cheek. One was thinking—really thinking—for the first time in one's life; and, curiously enough, one was thinking about a girl, although girls were manifestly of no earthly importance.

But Anne Willoughby was different. Even at the age when girls were feckless creatures, whose aim was inaccurate, and whose reasons for bursting into tears innumerable, one had perceived the difference. One wondered about it from time to time. Gradually, there awoke in one an uneasy, self-conscious interest as to all matters that concerned her, a mental pricking up of the ears when her name was mentioned. One lay awake o' nights, wondering why her hair curled so curiously about her temples, and held such queer glowing tints in its depths when the sunlight fell upon it; one was uncomfortable and embarrassed in her presence, but with her absence came the overwhelming desire of seeing her again.

After a little, it was quite understood that one was in love with Anne Willoughby. It was a matter of very minor importance that her father was the wealthiest man in Fairhaven, and that one's parents were poor. One would go away into foreign lands after a while, and come back with a great deal of money—lacs of rupees and pieces of eight, probably. It was very simple. Anne promised to write every day. But Anne's father had taken an entirely unreasonable view of the matter, and had carried Anne off to a terrible aunt, who returned one's letters

unopened. That was the end of Anne.

Followed a black period when nothing happened, and nothing mattered; followed the intervention of the measles, and a runaway horse, to make one the natural heir to a certain shadowy uncle, reputed to be fabulously wealthy. One came to New York; one's uncle was fairly kind. After a while, one married Patricia, because one's uncle wished it, and because one was fond of her, and because Anne was already married. One was happy—oh, undoubtedly, one was happy. One's uncle had died, leaving all that could be expected of him in the matter of a will; Patricia—well, Patricia was Patricia. One had no great reason to complain; undoubtedly, one was happy.

Upon reflection, Mr. Musgrave was quite sure that he was happy; it was only his liver or something that was out of order.

He found it, as many others have done, but cheerless sexton's work, this digging up of old memories. One by one, they come to light—the brave hopes and dreams and aspirations of youth; the ruddy life has gone out of them; they have shriveled into an alien, pathetic dignity. They might have been one's great-grandfather's or Hannibal's or Adam's; the boy whose life was swayed by them is quite as dead as these. Amaryllis is dead, too. Perhaps, you drop in of an afternoon to talk over old times; she is very sympathetic. She thinks it is quite time you were married. Then, after a little, the lamps of welcome are lighted in her eyes, her breath quickens, her cheeks mount goodly crimson flags in honor of her lord, her hero, her conqueror. It is Mr. Grundy, who is very happy to meet you, and hopes you will stay to dinner. He patronizes you a bit; his wife, you see, has told him all about that boy who is as dead as Hannibal. You don't mind in the least; you dine with Mr. and Mrs. Grundy, and pass a very pleasant evening.

But, perhaps, Grundy strikes you as being a hulking, sluggish brute; perhaps, you flush a little at seeing him.

In that case, if you are a wise man, you will not stay to dinner. You will avoid that house for the future, as you would a pestilence. For that flush is a signal that wise, kindly old Nature has flung across the path; it is the red light that signifies danger.

"She has improved wonderfully," thought Mr. Musgrave, "and I have no doubt—none in the world—that Charteris ill-treats her. I wonder——"

It was really a very stupid play, and a man might wonder many things during its progress without fear of his attention being distracted.

II

AN ARCADIAN PASTORAL

MRS. MUSGRAVE sat in the great maple-grove that lies behind Kingsland, and pondered over a very short letter from her husband; Mr. Charteris lay at her feet, glancing rapidly over a very long one, which was from his wife.

The morning mail was just in, and Mrs. Musgrave had despatched Charteris for her letters, on the plea that the woods were too beautiful to leave, and that Kingsland, in the unsettled state that marks the end of the week in a house-party, was intolerable. She, undoubtedly, was partial to the grove, having spent the last ten mornings there. Mr. Charteris had overrated her modest literary abilities so far as to ask her advice in certain details of his new book, which was to appear in the Autumn, and they had found a vernal solitude, besides being extremely picturesque, to be conducive to the forming of really matured opinions. Moreover, she was assured that none of the members of the house-party would misunderstand her motives; people were so much less censorious in the country; there was something in the pastoral purity of Nature, seen face to face, that brought out one's noblest instincts, and put an end to all horrid gossip and scandal-mongering. Didn't Mrs. Ashmeade think so? And what was her

real opinion of that rumor about the Van Ordens, and was the woman as bad as people said she was? Thus had Mrs. Musgrave spoken in the privacy of her chamber, at that hour when ladies do up their hair for the night, and discourse of mysteries. It is at this time that they are said to babble out their hearts to one another; and so, beyond doubt, this must have been the real state of the case.

As Mrs. Musgrave admitted, she had given up esoteric Buddhism, and taken to literature only during the past year. She now conversed of it with a certain fitful persistence like that of an ill-regulated machine. Her comments were considered delightfully frank and original, as she had an unusually good memory. Of two books, she was apt to prefer the one with the wider margins, and she was sufficiently familiar with a vast number of poets to quote them inaccurately. However, she was young, and very, very beautiful.

Mr. Charteris—but we have all seen Mr. Charteris's portrait in the literary magazines, and most of us have read his books. Therefore, most of us know that he is clever and slight and dark, and that his hair is growing a little thin, and that he is not ill-favored. It may be of interest to his many admirers to add that his reason for wearing a mustache in this period of clean-shaven faces is that, without it, his mouth is not pleasant to look upon.

"Heigho!" said Mrs. Musgrave, at length, with a little laugh; "it is very strange that both of our encumbrances should arrive on the same day!"

"It is unfortunate," Mr. Charteris admitted, lazily; "but the blessed state of matrimony is liable to these mishaps. Let us be thankful that my wife's whim to visit her aunt has given us, at least, two perfect, golden weeks. Husbands are like bad pennies; and wives resemble the cat whose adventures have been commemorated by one of our really popular poets. They always come back."

There was a pause; Mrs. Musgrave communed with herself, and seemed, as she sat in the chequered sunlight,

far more beautiful than a married woman has any right to be.

"I wish—" she began, slowly. "Oh, I do wish——"

"So do I," Charteris assented, and laughed his utter comprehension. "But, after all," he cried, and snapped his fingers gaily, "we have still twenty-four hours, Patricia! Let us forget the crudities of life, and say foolish things to each other. I am pastorally inclined this morning, Patricia; I wish to lie at your feet and pipe amorous ditties upon an oaten reed. Have you such an article about you, Patricia?" He drew a key-ring from his pocket, and pondered over it. "Or would you prefer that I whistle into the opening of this door-key, to the effect that we must gather our rosebuds while we may, for Time is still a-flying, fa-la, and that a drear old age, not to mention our spouses, will soon descend upon us, fa-la? A door-key is not Arcadian, Patricia, but it makes a very creditable noise."

"Don't be foolish, *mon ami!*" she protested, with an indulgent smile. "I am very unhappy."

"Unhappy that I have chanced to fall in love with you, Patricia? It is an accident that might befall any man."

She shrugged her shoulders, ruefully. "I have done very wrong to let you talk to me as you have done of late. I—oh, Jack, I am afraid!"

Mr. Charteris meditated. Somewhere in a neighboring thicket a bird trilled out his song—a contented, half-hushed little song that called his mate to witness how infinitely blest above all other birds was he. Mr. Charteris heard him to the end, and languidly made as though to applaud; then, he raised his eyebrows.

"Of your husband, Patricia?" he queried.

"I—Rudolph doesn't care for me sufficiently to—to notice anything."

Mr. Charteris smiled. "Of my wife, Patricia?"

"No; I have not the least doubt you will explain matters satisfactorily to your wife. I have always heard that practice makes perfect."

Mr. Charteris laughed—a low and very musical laugh. “Of me, then, Patricia?”

“I—I think it is rather of myself I am afraid. Oh, I hate you when you smile like that! You have evil eyes, Jack! Stop it! Stop it, I say!” The ridiculously small hand she had raised in a threatening fashion fell back into her lap, and she shrugged her shoulders once more. “My nerves are somewhat upset by the approaching prospect of connubial felicity, I suppose. Really, though, *mon ami*, your conceit is appalling.”

Charteris gave vent to a chuckle, and raised the door-key to his lips. “When you are quite through with your histrionic efforts,” he suggested, apologetically, “I will proceed with my amorous pipings. Really, Patricia, one might fancy you the heroine of a society drama, working up the sympathies of the audience before taking to evil ways. Surely, you are not about to leave your dear, good, patient husband, Patricia? Heroines only do that on dark and stormy nights, and in an opera toilette; wearing her best gown seems always to affect a heroine in that way.” Mr. Charteris, at this point, dropped the key-ring, and drew nearer to her; his voice sank to a pleading cadence. “We are in Arcadia, Patricia; virtue and vice are contraband in this charming country, and must be left at the frontier. Let us be adorably foolish and happy, my lady, and forget for a little the evil days that approach. Can’t you fancy this Arcadia, Patricia?—it requires very little imagination. Listen very carefully, and you will hear the bright-eyed fauns rustling among the fallen leaves; they are watching us, Patricia, from behind every tree-bole. They think you a dryad—the queen of all the dryads, with the most glorious eyes and hair and the most tempting lips in all the forest. After a little, goat-footed Pan will grow jealous, and ravish you away from me, as he stole Syrinx from her lover. You are very beautiful, Patricia; you are quite incredibly beautiful. I adore you, Pa-

tricia. Would you mind very much if I held your hand? It is a foolish thing to do, but it is Arcadian.”

She had heard him with downcast eyes; her cheeks flushed a pink color that was highly agreeable to contemplate. “Do—do you really care for me, Jack?” she asked, softly; then cried, very quickly, “No, no, don’t answer—of course, you worship me madly, unboundedly, distractedly. They all do, but you do it more convincingly. You’ve had lots of practice, no doubt. And, Jack, really, really, I always stopped the others when they talked in this way. I tried to stop you, too. You—you know I did?” She raised her lashes, a trifle uncertainly, and withdrew her hand from his—a trifle slowly. “It is wrong—all horribly wrong. I wonder at myself. I—I shall not be alone with you again. I shall tell my husband all,” she concluded, manifestly not meaning a word of what she said.

“By all means,” assented Mr. Charteris, readily. “Let’s tell my wife, too. It will make things so very interesting.”

“Rudolph would be terribly unhappy,” she reflected.

“He would probably never smile again,” said Mr. Charteris. “And my wife—oh, it would upset her, frightfully! It is our bounden duty to save them from such misery.”

“I—I don’t know what to do!” she wailed, helplessly.

“The obvious course,” said he, after reflection, “is to shake off the bonds of matrimony, without further delay. Let’s elope, Patricia.”

Mrs. Musgrave, who was genuinely unhappy, took refuge in flippancy, and laughed somewhat shrilly. “I make it a rule,” said she, “never to elope on Fridays. Besides, now I think of it, there’s Rudolph—ah, Rudolph doesn’t care for me, I know, but he can be horribly disagreeable at times. I assure you, *mon ami*, he is a veritable Othello, and infinitely prefers the bolster to the divorce-court. He’d have us followed and torn apart by wild policemen.”

Mr. Charteris meditated for a moment. "I don't remember Rudolph very clearly. Isn't he a rather corpulent person—something like a retired and eminently respectable brewer?"

"Ah, don't make fun of Rudolph!" she cried, quickly. "Rudolph is no fool; and he's a good man, Jack—a good, clean, healthy, strong man! You aren't; you're weak and frivolous, and you sneer too much and—and that's why I like you, I suppose. Oh, I wish I were good; I've tried to be. Jack, you know I've tried to be good! I've never let you kiss me, and I never let you hold my hand—until to-day—and—and—" Mrs. Musgrave paused, and laughed, shortly. "We were talking of Rudolph," she said, with a touch of weariness. "Rudolph has all the good qualities that a woman most admires—theoretically."

"I thank you," said Mr. Charteris, "for the high opinion you entertain of my moral character." He bestowed a reproachful sigh upon her, and continued: "At any rate, Rudolph Musgrave has been an unusually lucky man—the luckiest that I know of."

Mrs. Musgrave had risen as if to go. She turned her big green eyes upon him for a moment. "You—you think so?" she queried, hesitatingly. Afterward, she spread out her hands in a helpless gesture, and laughed for no apparent reason, and sat down again. "Why?" said Mrs. Musgrave.

It took Charteris fully an hour to point out all the reasons. Mrs. Musgrave told him very frankly that she considered him to be talking nonsense, but she seemed quite willing to listen.

III

A CONTENTED WOMAN

SUNSET was approaching on the following afternoon when Rudolph Musgrave came out upon the piazza at Kingsland. He had arrived on the afternoon train, about an hour previously; and, having dressed at once for dinner, found himself ready for

that meal somewhat in advance of the rest of the house-party. Indeed, only one of them was visible at that moment—a woman, who was reading on a rustic bench some distance from the house, and whose back was turned to him. The poise of her head, however, was not unfamiliar; also, it is not every one who has hair that is like a nimbus of burnished copper.

Mr. Musgrave threw back his shoulders, and drew a deep breath. Subsequently, with a fine air of unconcern, he inspected the view from the piazza, which was, indeed, quite worthy of his attention. Interesting things have happened at Kingsland—many things that have been preserved in the local mythology, not always to the credit of the old Stanhopes, and a few that have even slipped into a modest niche in history. It was, perhaps, on these that Mr. Musgrave pondered so intently.

Once the farthingaled and red-heeled gentry came in sluggish barges to Kingsland, and the broad river on which it faces was thick with bellying sails; since the days of railroads, one approaches it through the maple-grove in the rear, and enters ignominiously by the back-door. The house stands on a considerable elevation. The main portion, with its hipped roof and mullioned windows, is very old, but the two wings that stretch to the east and west are comparatively modern, and date back only a little over a century. Time has mellowed them into harmony with the major part of the house, and the kindly Virginia creeper has done its utmost to conceal the fact that they are constructed of plebeian bricks that were made in this country; but Kingsland was Kingsland long before they were built, and a mere affair of yesterday, such as the Revolution, antedates them. They were not standing when Tarleton paid his famous visit to Kingsland. In the great hall, you may still see the stairs up which he rode on horseback, and the slashes which his sabre hacked upon the hand-rail.

In the front of the mansion lies a

close-shaven lawn, dotted with sundry oaks and maples; from this, the formal gardens descend in six broad terraces. The seventh terrace was, until lately, uncultivated, the trees having been cleared away to afford pasturage. It is now closely planted with beeches, none of very great size, and extends to a tangled thicket of pine and cedar and sassafras and blackberry-bushes, which again masks a sudden drop of some ten feet to the river. The beach here is very narrow; at high tide, it is rarely more than fifteen feet in breadth, and is in many places completely submerged. Past this, the river lapses into the horizon line without a break, save on a very clear day when Bigelow's Island may be seen as a dim smudge upon the west.

All these things, Rudolph Musgrave regarded with curiously deep interest for one who had seen them so many times before. Then, with a shrug of the shoulders, he sauntered forward across the lawn. He had planned several appropriate speeches, but, when it came to the point of giving them utterance, he merely held out his hand in a rather awkward fashion, and said:

"Anne!"

She looked up quickly from her reading. She did this with two red-brown eyes that had no apparent limits to their depth. Her hand was very soft; it seemed quite lost in the broad palm of a man's hand.

"Dear Rudolph," she said, as simply as though they had parted yesterday, "it's awfully good to see you again."

Mr. Musgrave cleared his throat, and sat down beside her. A moment later, Mr. Musgrave cleared his throat once more.

Then, Mrs. Charteris laughed. It was a pleasant laugh—a clear, rippling carol of clean mirth that sparkled in her eyes, and dimpled in her wholesome cheeks. "Do you find it very, very awkward?"

"Awkward!" he cried. Their glances met in a flash of comprehension that seemed to purge the air.

Musgrave was not in the least self-conscious now. He laughed, and lifted an admonitory forefinger. "Anne, Anne!" said he, "I can't do it, my dear—I really can't live up to the requirements of being a Buried Past. In a proper story-book or play, I'd have come back from New Zealand or the Transvaal, all covered with glory and epaulets, and have found you in the last throes of consumption; but you've fattened, Anne, which a Buried Past never does, and which shows a sad lack of consideration for my feelings. And I—ah, my dear, I must confess that my hair is growing thin, and that my life hasn't been entirely empty without you, and that I ate and enjoyed two mutton-chops at luncheon, though I knew I should see you to-day. I'm afraid we're neither of us up to heroics, Anne. Let's be sensible and comfy, my dear."

"You brute!" she cried—not looking very angry, but still not without a touch of vexation; "don't you know that every woman cherishes the picture of her former lovers sitting alone in the twilight, and growing lackadaisical over old memories and faded letters? And you—you approach me, after I don't dare to think how many years, as calmly as if I were an old schoolmate of your mother's, and attempt to talk to me about mutton-chops! You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Rudolph Musgrave. You might, at least, have started a little at seeing me, and have clasped your hand to your heart, and have said, 'You, you!' or something of the sort. I had every right—*every* right—to expect it."

Mrs. Charteris pouted, and then trifled for a moment with the pages of her book. It was "Ashtaro's Lackey," and the author was Mr. John Charteris. She had been speaking with a very definite purpose; even the book may have been not entirely accidental. She was genuinely fond of Rudolph Musgrave; she intended to see as much of him as should be possible during their stay at Kings-

land; and she also intended on this first afternoon to have done with a necessarily awkward meeting, and to establish their future relations for all time. For a woman who made no pretensions to cleverness, she had, so far, acted wisely; but her conscience accused her of the blackest deceit. She added, impulsively, and with a slight hiatus: "Frankly, Rudolph, I am very happy."

"Ah, it was a great while ago we went mad for each other," Musgrave said, and smiled. "I fancy that the boy and girl we knew of are as dead now as Nebuchadnezzar. 'Marian's married, and I sit here alive and merry at'—well, not precisely at forty year, but with every prospect of reaching that period of life in due time."

"If you continue in that heartless strain, I shall go into the house," Mrs. Charteris protested. Her indignation was exaggerated, but it was not altogether feigned; women cannot quite pardon a rejected suitor who marries and is content. They wish him all imaginable happiness and prosperity, of course; they are genuinely interested in his welfare; but it seems a little unfeeling in him. Mrs. Charteris, therefore, added, with emphasis: "I am really disgracefully happy."

"Glad to hear it," said Musgrave, placidly. "So am I."

"Oh, Rudolph, Rudolph, you are hopeless!" she sighed. "And you used to make such a nice lover!" Mrs. Charteris looked out over the river, a little wistfully, and was silent for a moment. "I was frightfully in love with you, Rudolph," she said, half in wonder. "After—after that horrible time when my parents forced us to behave rationally, I wept—oh, I must have wept deluges! I firmly intended to pine away to an early grave, but—but Jack came, you see."

"H'm!" said Mr. Musgrave; "yes, I see."

"I want you to like Jack," she went on, and her face lighted up, and her voice grew tender. "He tells me he has never known you well, and, of course, we've been abroad a long time. Men

don't like him, as a rule, but I want you to. He has the artistic temperament, and naturally that makes him sensitive, and—and a little irritable and brusque at times. It takes so little to upset him, you see, for he feels so acutely what—what he calls the discords of life. I think most men are jealous of his talents; so they call him selfish and finicky. He isn't really, you know. Only, he can't help feeling a little superior to the majority of men, and his artistic temperament leads him to magnify the lesser mishaps of life—such as the steak being overdone, or missing a train. Oh, really a little thing like that worries him as much as the loss of a fortune, or a death in the family, would any one else! Jack says there are no such things as trifles in a harmonious and well-proportioned life, and I suppose that's true to men of genius. Of course, I'm rather a Philistine, and I grate on him at times—that is, I used to, but he says I've improved, wonderfully. Oh, we're ridiculously happy, Jack and I!"

Musgrave cast about vainly for an appropriate speech. Then, he compromised with his conscience, and said: "Your husband is a very clever man."

"Isn't he?" She flushed for pleasure at hearing him praised. Oh, she loved him! There was no questioning that; it was written in her face, was vibrant in her voice as she spoke of him. "Now, really, Rudolph, aren't his books wonderful? I don't appreciate them, of course, for I'm not clever, but I know you do. Oh, you'll like Jack, for you're both clever men. I don't see why men think him selfish! I know better. You have to live with Jack really to appreciate him. Every day, I discover some new side of his character that makes him dearer to me. He's so clever—and so noble! Why, I remember—before Jack made his first hit with 'Ashtaroth's Lackey,' he lived with his sister. They hadn't any money, and, of course, Jack couldn't be expected to take a clerkship or anything like that; business details make his head ache, poor boy! So, his sister taught school, and he lived with her.

They were very happy—his sister simply adores him, and I'm positively jealous of her sometimes—but, unfortunately, the bank in which she kept her money failed one day. I remember it was just before he asked me to marry him, and told me, in his dear, laughing manner, that he hadn't a penny in the world, and that we should have to live on bread and cheese and kisses. Of course, I had a plenty for us both—my father was dead then, you know—so we weren't really in danger of being reduced to that. Well, I wanted to make his sister an allowance. But Jack pointed out, with considerable reason, that one person could live very comfortably on an income that had formerly supported two. He said it wasn't right I should be burdened with the support of his family. Jack was so sensitive, you see, lest people might think he was making a mercenary marriage, and that his sister was profiting by it. So, he was quite firm about the allowance. Now, I call that one of the noblest things I ever heard of, for he is devotedly attached to his sister, and, naturally, it is a great grief to him to see her compelled to work for a living. His last book was dedicated to her, and the dedication is one of the most tender and pathetic things I ever read."

Musgrave was hardly conscious of what she was saying. She was not particularly intelligent, this handsome, cheery woman, but her voice, and the richness and sweetness of it, and the vitality of her laugh, contented his soul. He loved her; it came to him quite simply that he loved her, and had always loved her. He had no desire to tell her of this, no idea that it would affect in any way the tenor of his life. He merely accepted the fact that he loved her, and that her dear presence seemed, somehow, to strengthen and cheer and comfort and content beyond the reach of thought.

Yet, Musgrave recognized her lack of cleverness, and liked and admired her none the less. A sudden vision of Patricia rose before him—a vision of a dainty, shallow, Dresden-china face with a surprising quantity of pale-gold

hair about it. Patricia was beautiful; Patricia was clever, in a way. But Rudolph Musgrave doubted very much if her mocking eyes ever softened into that brooding, sacred tenderness he had seen in Anne's eyes; he doubted very much if a hurried, happy little thrill ran through Patricia's voice when she spoke of her husband.

"You've unquestionably married an unusual man," Musgrave said. "I must cultivate him. I—by Jove, you know, I fancy my wife finds him almost as attractive as you do!"

"Ah, Rudolph, I can't fancy any woman whom—whom you loved caring for any one else. Don't I remember, sir, how irresistible you can be when you choose?" Anne laughed, and raised her hands to heaven. "Really, though, women pursue him to a perfectly indecent extent! I have to watch over him carefully; not that I distrust him, of course, for—dear Jack!—he's so much in love with me, and cares so little for other women, that Joseph would seem in comparison only a depraved old roué. But the women—why, Rudolph, there was an Italian countess at Rome—the impudent minx!—who actually made me believe—However, Jack explained all that, after I had made both a spectacle and a nuisance of myself, and he had behaved so nobly in the entire affair that for days afterward I was positively limp with repentance. Then, in Paris—but he explained that, too. Some women are shameless, Rudolph!" Mrs. Charteris concluded, and sighed her pity for them.

"Utterly so!" Musgrave assented, gravely.

He was feeling a bit queer and uncomfortable. The place had grown suddenly horrible to him. The sun was very low, and the long shadows of the trees were black on the dim lawn. People were assembling for dinner, and passing to and fro under the branches; the gaily-colored gowns of the women glimmered softly through a faint blue haze like that in a Watteau painting. Inside the house, some one was playing an unpleasant sort of air

on the piano—an air that was quite needlessly creepy and haunting and insistent. It all seemed like a grim bit out of a play. The tenderness and pride that shone in Anne's eyes as she boasted of her happiness troubled him. He had a perfectly unreasonable desire to carry her away, by force, if necessary, and to protect her from clever people, and to buy things for her.

"So, I'm an old, old married woman now, and—and I think I suit Jack better than a more clever woman might. I'm glad your wife has taken such a fancy to him. I want you to follow her example. Jack says she's one of the most attractive women he ever met; he asked me to-day why I didn't do my hair like hers. She—she must make you very happy, Rudolph?"

"My wife," Mr. Musgrave said, "is, in my partial opinion, a very clever and very beautiful woman."

"Yes; cleverness and beauty are sufficient to make any man happy, I suppose," Anne hazarded, tentatively. "Jack says, though—Are cleverness and beauty the main things in a wife, Rudolph?"

"Undoubtedly," he protested.

"Now, that," she said, judicially, "shows the difference in men. Jack says a man loves a woman, not for her beauty or any other quality she possesses, but just because she's the woman he loves and can't help loving."

"Ah! I dare say that is the usual reason. Dear God, yes!" said Mr. Musgrave, an uncertain quiver in his voice—"because she's the woman he loves and can't help loving!"

Anne clapped her hands together, gleefully. "Ah, so I've penetrated your indifference at last, sir!" Impulsively, she laid her hand upon his arm, and spoke with great earnestness. "Dear Rudolph, I'm so glad you've found the woman you can really love. Jack—Jack says there's only one possible woman in the whole world for each man, and that he very rarely finds her."

"Yes," said Musgrave. He had risen, and was looking down rather curiously

into her eyes. "Yes, there's only one possible woman. And—and, yes, I think I've found her, Anne."

IV

A PAGE FROM PLATO

THE next morning, Mrs. Musgrave and Mr. Charteris met—quite by accident—on the seventh terrace of the gardens. Mrs. Musgrave had mentioned casually at the breakfast-table that she intended to spend the forenoon there in making notes for a paper on "The Symbolism of Dante," which she was to read before the Philomathean Club in October; but Mr. Charteris, it appeared, had not overheard her. He was seated on the piazza, working out a somewhat difficult point in his new book, when it had occurred to him that this particular terrace would be an inspiring and appropriate place in which to think the matter over, undisturbed. It was impossible he should have known that any one was there, as the seventh terrace happens to be the only one that, being planted with beech-trees, is completely screened from observation. From the house, you cannot see anything that happens there.

It was a curious accident, though. It really seemed, now that Mrs. Musgrave had put an ending to their meetings in the maple-grove, that Fate conspired to bring them together.

However, as Mr. Charteris pointed out, there could be no possible objection to this conspiracy, since they had decided that their friendship was to be of a purely platonic nature. It was a severe trial to him, he confessed, to be forced to put aside certain dreams he had had of the future—mad dreams, perhaps, but such as had seemed very dear and very plausible to his impractical artistic temperament; still, it heartened him to hope that their friendship—since it was to be no more—might prove a survival, or, rather, a veritable renaissance of the beautiful old Greek spirit in such matters. And,

though the blind chance that mismanaged the world had chained them to uncongenial, though certainly well-meaning, persons, this was no logical reason why they should be deprived of the pleasures of intellectual intercourse. Their souls were too closely akin. For Mr. Charteris admitted that his soul was Grecian to the core, and out of place and puzzled and very lonely in a sordid, bustling world; and he assured Patricia—she did not object if he called her Patricia?—that her own soul possessed all the beauty and purity and calm of an Aphrodite sculptured by Phidias. It was such a soul as Horace might have loved, as Theocritus might have hymned in glad Greek song.

Patricia flushed, and dissented somewhat.

"Frankly, *mon ami*," she said, "you are far too attractive for your company to be quite safe. You are such an adept in the nameless little attentions that women love—so profuse with the lesser sugar-plums of speech and action, that after two weeks one's husband is really necessary as an antidote. Sugar-plums are good, but, like all good things, unwholesome. I shall prescribe Rudolph's company for myself, to ward off an attack of moral indigestion. I am very glad he has come—really glad," she added, conscientiously. "Poor Rudolph! he so rarely has a holiday from those—those—What are those things, *mon ami*, that are always going up and down in Wall street?"

"Elevators?" Mr. Charteris suggested.

"Stupid! I mean those N. P.'s and N. Y. C.'s and those other letters that are always having flurries and panics and things. They keep him incredibly busy."

She sighed, tolerantly. Patricia really believed that she was neglected, if not positively ill-treated by her husband; and she had no earthly objection to Mr. Charteris thinking likewise. Her face expressed patient resignation now, as they walked under the close-matted foliage of the beech-trees, which made a pleasant, sun-flecked

gloom about them. Patricia removed her hat—it really was rather close—and paused where a slanting sunbeam fell upon her pale hair, and glorified her wistful countenance. She sighed once more, and added a finishing touch to the portrait of a *femme incomprise*. "Pray, don't think, *mon ami*," she said, very earnestly, "that I am blaming Rudolph! I—I suppose no woman need ever hope to have part in her husband's inner life."

"Not in her own husband's, of course," said Charteris, cryptically.

Patricia rallied with a pale smile. "Don't let's be clever. Cleverness is always a mistake; before luncheon, it is a misdemeanor. It makes me feel as if I had attended a Welsh-rabbit supper the night before. Your wife must be very patient."

"My wife," cried Charteris, in turn resolved to screen an unappreciative mate, "is a dear, kind-hearted little Philistine! At times, I grant you——"

"Oh, of course!" Patricia said, impatiently. Then, she added, with slight irrelevance: "They were boy and girl together, you know, in some poky little place where buttercups and sewing-circles were the chief features. I wonder——"

"In fact," said Mr. Charteris, "I have frequently observed that the influence of the buttercup is fully as disturbing to the heart as that of the sewing-circle is to the reputation. I should think it highly probable."

"No; Rudolph isn't that sort. Rudolph—oh, Rudolph is perfection! How could any woman possibly care for him?" Patricia snapped her fingers—she had caught the gesture from Charteris—and spoke somewhat crossly: "I suppose your wife is an angel?"

"Why?" His eyebrows lifted, and he smiled.

"Wasn't it an angel," she asked, considering his shoes very carefully, "who barred the first man and woman out of paradise?"

"If—if I thought you meant that——!" he cried; then, he shrugged his shoulders. "My wife's virtues merit a better husband than Fate has accorded

her. Anne is the best woman I have ever known."

Patricia was naturally irritated. After all, one does not meet a man accidentally in a plantation of young beech-trees in order to hear him discourse of his wife's good qualities; besides, he was speaking in a very disagreeably solemn manner, rather as if he fancied himself in church. Therefore, Patricia cast down her eyes again, and said: "Men of genius are so rarely understood by their wives."

"We will waive the question of genius." Mr. Charteris laughed very heartily, but he had flushed for pleasure. "I suppose," he continued, pacing up and down with a certain cat-like fervor, "that matrimony is always more or less of a compromise—like two convicts chained together trying to catch each other's gait. After a while, they succeed to a certain extent; the chain is still heavy, of course, but it doesn't gall them as it used to do. I fear the artistic temperament is not suited to marriage; its capacity for suffering is too great." Mr. Charteris caught his breath in a shuddering, effective little fashion, and paused before Patricia. After a moment, he grasped her by both wrists. "We are chained fast enough, my lady," he cried, bitterly, "and our sentence is for life! There are green fields yonder, but our place is here in the prison-yard. There is laughter yonder in the fields, and the scent of the flowers floats in to us at times when we are very weary, and the whispering trees sway their branches over the prison-wall, and their fruit is good to look on, and hangs within easy reach—ah, we might reach it very easily! But it is forbidden fruit, my lady; it isn't included in our wholesome prison-fare. Don't think of it! We have been happy, you and I, for a little. We might—Don't think of it! Don't dare to think of it! Go back and help your husband drag his chain; it galls him as sorely as it does you. It galls us all. It is the heaviest chain was ever forged; but we don't dare shake it off!"

"I—oh, Jack, Jack, don't talk to me

like that! We must be brave. We must be sensible." Patricia, regardless of her skirts, sat down upon the ground, and produced a pocket-handkerchief. "I—oh, how dare you make me so unhappy?" she demanded, indignantly.

"Ah, Patricia," he murmured, as he knelt beside her, "how can you hope to have a man ever talk to you in a sane fashion? You shouldn't have such eyes, Patricia! They are green and fathomless like the ocean, and, when a man looks into them too long, his sanity grows weak, and sinks and drowns in their cool depths, and the man must babble out his foolish heart to you. Oh, you shouldn't have such eyes, Patricia! They are dangerous, and, oh, they are much too bright to wear in the morning! They are bad form, Patricia!"

"We must be sensible," she sobbed. "Your wife is here; my husband is here. We—we aren't children or madmen, Jack, dear. We—we really must be sensible, I suppose. Oh, Jack," she cried, suddenly, "it isn't honorable!"

"Dear God, no! Poor little Anne!" Mr. Charteris's eyes grew tender for a moment; for his wife, in a fashion, was very dear to him. Then, he laughed, discordantly. "How can a man remember honor, Patricia, when the choice lies between honor and you? You shouldn't have such hair, Patricia! It is a mesh of sunlight—of pale, Winter sunlight—and its tendrils have curled around what little honor I ever boasted of, and they hold it fast, Patricia. It is dishonorable to love you, but I cannot think of that when I am with you and hear you speak. The very sound of your voice quickens my pulses. Oh, Patricia, you shouldn't have such a voice!"

But the great gong, booming out for luncheon, interrupted him at this point, and Mr. Charteris was never permitted to finish his complaint against Patricia's voice. It was absolutely imperative they should be in time for luncheon; for, as Patricia pointed out, the majority of people are very censorious, and lose no opportunity for saying

nasty things. They are even capable of sneering at a purely platonic friendship that is attempting to preserve the beautiful old Greek spirit.

V

PROVIDENCE AND MRS. ASHMEADE

MRS. ASHMEADE now comes into the story. She is only an episode. Still, her intervention led to some very peculiar results—results, curiously enough, in which she was not in the least concerned. She simply comes into the story for a moment, and then goes out of it; but her part is an important one. She is like the watchman who announces the coming of Agamemnon; Clytemnestra sharpens her knife at the news, and the fatal bath is prepared for the *anax andron*. The tragedy moves on; the house of Atreus falls, and the wrath of implacable gods bellows across the heavens; meanwhile, the watchman has gone home to take tea with his family, and we hear no more of him. There are any number of morals in this.

Mrs. Ashmeade comes into the story just nine days after Rudolph Musgrave's arrival at Kingsland. Since then, affairs had progressed in a not unnatural sequence. Mr. Charteris, as we have seen, attributed it to Fate; and, assuredly, there must be a special providence of some kind that presides over country houses—a rather freakish, whimsical providence, that rejoices hugely in confounding one's sense of time and direction. Through its agency, people very unaccountably lose their way in the simplest walks, and turn up late and embarrassed for luncheon; at the end of the evening, it brings couples blinking out of the dark, with no idea it was more than half-past nine; and it delights in sending one into the garden—after roses, of course—and there causing one to meet the most unlikely people—really, quite the last person one would have thought of meeting. It is responsible for a great number of marriages, and, it may be,

for a large percentage of the divorce-cases; for, if you desire very heartily to see much of another member of a house-party, this lax-minded, easy-going providence, somehow, brings it about, in a speciously natural manner, and without any apparent thought of the consequences. And the Stanhopes' house-party was no exception.

Mrs. Ashmeade, for reasons of her own, objected to this. The others were largely engrossed by their own affairs; they did not concern themselves much about the doings of their fellow-guests. And, if Rudolph Musgrave manifestly sought the company of Anne Charteris, her husband did not appear to be dissatisfied or angry or even lonely; and, moreover, the fact remained that Mrs. Stanhope was at this time deeply interested in Bob Townsend, the young Englishman; and Billy Woods was undeniably very attentive to Margaret Hugonin; and Teddy Anstruther certainly spent a great part of his time on the beach with Alicia Wade. Every one's house has, at least, a pane or two of glass in it, you see; and, if indiscriminate stone-throwing were ever to become the fashion, there is really no telling what damage might ensue. And, had Mrs. Ashmeade been a younger woman—had her weight been, say, some twenty pounds less—she would probably have remained silent, and never have come into the story at all.

As it was, she approached Rudolph Musgrave with a perfectly fixed purpose this morning as he smoked on the piazza of Kingsland. Mr. Charteris and Mrs. Musgrave were just disappearing into the gardens, where they were going to polish off his paper on "The Symbolism of Dante."

"Rudolph," said Mrs. Ashmeade, impatiently, "are you blind?"

"You mean—?" he asked, and broke off, for he had really no idea what she meant.

Mrs. Ashmeade waved her hand, comprehensively, after the retreating couple. "I mean—that."

If ever amazement and utter incredulity shone in a man's eyes, they shone now in Rudolph Musgrave's.

After a little, the pupils widened in a sort of terror.

"Nonsense!" he cried. "Why—why, it's nonsense, I tell you—utter, preposterous, Bedlamite nonsense!" He caught his breath in sheer wonder at the thought of this grim jest. "It—oh, no, Fate hasn't such a fine sense of humor as that! The thing's incredible!" Musgrave laughed, shortly, and then flushed. "I mean——"

"I don't think you need tell me what you mean," said Mrs. Ashmeade. She sat down in a large rocking-chair, and fanned herself slowly, for the day was warm. "Of course, it's very officious and presumptuous and disagreeable of me to meddle; I don't mind your thinking that, in the least. But—oh, Rudolph, don't make the mistake of thinking that Fate ever misses a jest at the expense of humanity. It never does. I tell you—it never does." She paused, and her kindly eyes were full of memories, and very wise. "I'm only a looker-on at the tragic farce that's being played here," she continued, after a little, "but lookers-on, you know, see most of the game. They aren't playing fairly with you, Rudolph; they aren't playing fairly, my dear, and you ought to know."

He walked up and down the piazza once or twice, with his hands behind him; then, he stopped before Mrs. Ashmeade, and smiled down at her. "No, I don't think you officious or meddling or anything of the sort. I think you're one of the best and kindest-hearted women in the world. But—but, bless your motherly soul, Polly, the thing's preposterous—utterly preposterous, I assure you! Of course, Patricia's young, and likes attention, and—and it pleases her to have men admire her. That's natural, Polly—perfectly natural. Why, you wouldn't expect her to sit around under the trees, and read poetry with her own husband, would you? We've been married far too long for that, Patricia and I. She—she thinks me rather prosy and stupid at times, poor girl, because—well, because, in point of fact, I am. But, at the bottom of her

heart— Oh, it's preposterous! We're the best friends in the world, I tell you! It's simply that Charteris amuses her."

"You don't know Jack Charteris. I do," said Mrs. Ashmeade, placidly. "Charteris is simply a man of genius who happens to be an unmitigated cad. He isn't merely selfish; he is selfishness incarnate. I sometimes believe it's the only trait the man possesses. He reaches out his hand, and takes whatever he wants, just as a baby would, quite simply, and quite as a matter of course. He wants your wife now, and he is reaching out his hand to take her. He isn't conscious of doing anything especially wrong; he's always so plausible in whatever he does that he ends by deceiving himself, I suppose. For he's always plausible. It's utterly useless to argue any matter with him; he invariably ends by making you feel as if you'd been caught stealing a hat. The only argument that would ever get the better of him is knocking him down, just as spanking is the only argument that ever gets the better of a baby. Yes, he's very like a baby—thoroughly selfish and thoroughly dependent on other people; only, he's a clever baby who exaggerates his own helplessness in order to appeal to women. He—he has a taste for women. And women like him; he impresses them as an irresponsible child astray in an artful and designing world. They want to protect him. Even I do, at times. It's really maternal, you know; we'd infinitely prefer him to be soft and little, so that we could pick him up, and cuddle him. But as it is—he's dangerous." Her voice died away, and Mrs. Ashmeade fanned herself in the way that most large women do—slowly and impersonally, and quite as if she was fanning some one else through motives of charity.

"I don't question," Musgrave said, at length, "that Mr. Charteris is the highly estimable character you describe. But—oh, it's all nonsense, Polly!" he cried, with a little petulance and with a shade—a mere shade—of conviction lacking in his voice.

The fan continued its majestic,

gradual sweep from the shade into the sunlight, and back again into the shadow.

"Rudolph, I know very well what you meant by saying Fate hadn't such a fine sense of humor."

"Dear lady, doubtless you know a great number of things."

For a moment, the fan paused; then went on as before.

"I know that Charteris, in his own fashion, is in love with Patricia; I know that Anne and Patricia, both in their own different fashions, are in love with Charteris; I know that you, in a very brave, silent fashion, are in love with Anne."

"This," Mr. Musgrave cried, "is clearly the effect of the sun! Why, I—I—! Oh, nonsense, Polly—come here and sit in the shade! Hadn't you better loosen your collar or something?"

"Ah, I know, my dear—I know," she said, with unshaken conviction. Her lips smiled, but her eyes—Mrs. Ashmeade has eyes that are remarkably bright and clear for a woman of forty-two—were rather sad than otherwise. "Rudolph, it's a sorry tangle. No outsider can straighten it. You must do it. Patricia and Charteris are too weak; Anne—well, Anne doesn't pretend to be clever, you know."

"No, thank God!" Musgrave blurted out, fervently. There is, of course, no telling what he may have meant.

"But you are both, Rudolph—you are the only strong one among them. It rests with you, my dear. I can't help you. I wish I could," and her voice rang true as she spoke. "Think over what I have said, and—and do what you consider best. It will be the manly, brave, right thing, I know."

"I'll think! Oh, yes, I'll think!" said Musgrave, striding up and down, divided between a strong disposition to swear at the universe at large, and a strong disposition to laugh at it. Somehow, it did not occur to him now to doubt what she had told him. It scarcely seemed worth while to ques-

tion it. Nothing seemed quite worth while. It was useless to struggle against a Fate that planned such preposterous and elaborate jokes; one might depend on Fate to work out some ludicrous, horrible solution. Nevertheless, he paused after a while, and laughed, with a tolerable affectation of mirth. "I say—I— What in heaven's name, Polly, prompted you to bring me this choice specimen of a mare's nest?"

"Because I'm fond of you, I suppose. Isn't one always privileged to be disagreeable to one's friends? We've been friends a long while, you know." Mrs. Ashmeade was looking out over the river now, but she seemed to see a great way, a very great way beyond its glaring waters, and to be rather uncertain as to whether what she beheld there was of a humorous or a pathetic nature. "Do you remember that evening—the first Summer that I knew you—at Fortress Monroe, when we sat upon the pier so frightfully late, and the moon rose up out of the bay, and made a great, solid-looking, silver path that led straight over the rim of the world, and you talked to me about—about——?"

"Oh, yes, yes—I remember perfectly! One of the most beautiful evenings I ever saw. I remember it quite distinctly. I talked—I—what did I talk about, Polly?"

"Ah, men forget! A woman never forgets when she is really—really friends with a man. I know now you were telling me about Anne; you've been in love with her all your life, Rudolph. But I thought—I actually thought you were trying to make love to me, and I was disappointed in you and—yes, rather pleased. Women are all vain and perfectly inconsistent." Mrs. Ashmeade rose from her chair. Her fan shut with a snap. "You were a dear boy, Rudolph, when I first knew you—a little rustic and unformed at first, but I formed you. I formed you, my dear; I taught you to come into a room properly, and to be courteous in the way that women

like, and—yes, I taught you how to make love. And what I liked was that you never made love to me. Of all the boys I've formed, you were the only sensible one—the only one who never presumed. It was dear of you, Rudolph. It—it would have been ridiculous; I'm seven years older than you." She smiled a little over the bare idea of such a thing. "Wouldn't it have been ridiculous, Rudolph?" she demanded, suddenly.

"Not in the least," Musgrave protested, in courteous wise. "You—why, Polly, you were a wonderfully handsome woman. Any boy——"

"Yes—I was. I'm not now, am I, Rudolph?" Mrs. Ashmeade threw back her head, and laughed, naturally. "Ah, dear boy, it's unfair, isn't it, for an old woman to seize upon you in this fashion, and insist on your making love to her? I'll let you off. You don't have to do it." She caught up her skirts in her left hand, preparatory to going, and her right hand rested lightly on his arm. She spoke in a rather peculiar voice. "Yes," she said, "the boy was a very, very dear boy, and I want the man to be equally brave and—sensible."

Musgrave stared after her. "I wonder—I wonder— Oh, no, that couldn't be," he said, wearily.

Afterward, he strolled across the lawn, meditating upon a great number of things. There were a host of fleecy little clouds in the sky. He looked up at them, rather interrogatively. Then, he smiled and shook his head.

"I don't know," said he; "I'm coming to the conclusion that the world is run on an extremely humorous basis."

VI

AS PLAYED BEFORE PATRICIA

MUSGRAVE had a brief interview with his wife after luncheon. He began with a quiet remonstrance, and ended with an unheard defense of his own position. Patricia's speech,

on such occasions, was of an unfettered and heady nature.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," she said, when she had finally paused for breath, and had wiped away her tears, and powdered her nose, viciously, "to bully a weak, defenseless woman in this way. I dare say everybody in the house has heard us—brawling and squabbling just like a hod-carrier and his wife. What's that? You haven't said a word for fifteen minutes? I don't care. I have, and I'm perfectly sure they've heard me, and I'm sure I don't care in the least, and it's all your fault, anyway. You have a mean nature, Rudolph—a mean, cruel, suspicious nature. Charteris is nothing to me; I would have been quite willing to give him up if you had spoken to me in a decent manner about it. You only said—? I don't care what you said; besides, if you did speak to me in a decent manner, it simply shows that your thoughts were so horrid and vulgar that even you didn't dare put them into words. Very well, then, I won't be seen with him so much in future. I realize you're quite capable of beating me if I don't give way to your absurd prejudices. Yes, you are, Rudolph; you're just the sort of man to take pleasure in beating a woman. After the exhibition of temper you've given this afternoon, I believe you're capable of anything. Hand me that parasol! Don't talk to me; I don't wish to hear anything you've got to say. You're simply driving me to my grave with your continual nagging and abuse and fault-finding. I'm sure I wish I were dead as much as you do. Is my hat on straight? How do you expect me to see into that mirror if you stand directly in front of it? There! not content with robbing me of every pleasure in life, I verily believe you were going to let me go down-stairs with my hat on crooked! Don't look at me like that. I'm not going to meet Mr. Charteris. I—I'm going driving with Bob Townsend; he asked me at luncheon. I suppose you'll object to him next; you object to all my friends. Very well! Now you've made me

utterly miserable for the entire afternoon, and I'm sure I hope you're satisfied with yourself."

There was a rustle of skirts, and the door slammed.

Musgrave went to his own room, where he spent a little interval in meditation. Then, he rang for one of the servants, questioned him, and was informed that Mr. Charteris had gone down to the beach just after luncheon. A moment later, Mr. Musgrave was walking through the gardens in that direction.

As he came to the thicket that screens the beach, he called Charteris's name loudly, in order to ascertain his whereabouts. That gentleman's voice answered him—not at once, but after a brief silence. It chanced that, at that moment, Musgrave had come to a thin place in the thicket, and could see Mr. Charteris very plainly; he was concealing some white object in the hollow of a log that lay by the river. A little later, Musgrave came out upon the beach, and found Mr. Charteris seated upon the same log, an open book upon his knees, and looking back wonderingly over his shoulder.

"Oh," said Mr. Charteris, "so it was you, Musgrave? I couldn't imagine who it was that called."

Now, there are five little red-and-white bath-houses upon the beach at Kingsland; the nearest of them was perhaps thirty feet from Mr. Charteris. It might have been imagination, but Musgrave certainly thought he heard its door closing. Moreover, as he walked around the end of the log, he glanced downward, in the most casual manner, and perceived a certain protrusion that bore an undeniable resemblance to the handle of a parasol. Musgrave whistled, though, at the bottom of his heart, he was not greatly surprised; then, he sat down upon the log, and was silent for a moment.

"Beautiful evening," said Mr. Charteris.

Musgrave lighted a cigarette.

"Mr. Charteris, I've something rather difficult to say to you—yes, it's deuced

difficult, and the sooner it's over the better. I—hang it all, man, I want you to stop making love to my wife."

Mr. Charteris's eyebrows rose. "Really, Mr. Musgrave—" he began, coolly.

"Now, you're about to make a scene, you know," said Musgrave, raising his hand in protest, "and we aren't here for that. We aren't going to tear any passions to tatters; we aren't going to rant; we're simply going to have a quiet, sensible talk. We aren't characters in a romance; you aren't Lancelot, you know, and I'm not up to the part of Arthur by a great deal. I'm not angry. I'm not jealous. I don't put the matter on any high moral grounds. I simply say it won't do—no, hang it, it won't do!"

There was a pause. Charteris was thinking—thinking with desperate celerity. Each man suspected the other of consciously playing to a hidden audience, and, at any hazard, Charteris was determined to seize the dominant rôle. Musgrave had chosen his ground well; Charteris knew he would have need of all the audacity he could muster to prevent his part being rendered laughable. And Mr. Charteris, in common with many men, esteemed it no laughing matter to be laughed at.

"At least," he said, at length, "you are commendably frank. I appreciate that, Musgrave; I appreciate the fact that you have come to me, not as the husband of that fiction in which kitchen-maids delight, breathing fire and speaking balderdash, but as one sensible man to another. Let us be frank, then; let us play with the cards upon the table. You have charged me with loving your wife; I answer you frankly—I do. She does me the honor to return this affection. What, then, Mr. Musgrave?" Surely, Patricia would admire that!

Musgrave blew out a puff of gray smoke. "I don't especially mind," he said, slowly. "According to tradition, of course, I ought to spring at your throat with a muttered curse. But, as a matter of fact, I'm not in the

least angry. I—yes, at the bottom of my heart,” he added, upon consideration, “I’m rather sorry for you.”

Unintentionally, he had drawn first blood. Mr. Charteris sprang to his feet, and walked hastily up and down the beach. “Ah, you hide your feelings well, Musgrave!” he cried; his laughter was a trifle unconvincing and a bit angry. “But it is unavailing with me. I know! I know the sick, impotent hatred of me that is seething in your heart; and I feel for you the pity you pretend to entertain toward me. Yes, I pity you. But what would you have? Frankly, while doubtless a most estimable man, you are no fit mate for Patricia. She has the sensitive, artistic temperament, poor girl, and only we who are cursed with it can tell you what its possession implies. And you—frankness is the order of the day, you know—you impress me as being a trifle *bourgeois*; it isn’t your fault, of course, but the fact remains that you are. Patricia’s most cherished aspirations and ideals, if they could ever be explained to you, would seem in your eyes a very choice collection of absurdities. You are no fit mate for her. Any community of interest between you is impossible—radically impossible. Your marriage was a mistake—a hideous mistake, just as mine was. You are starving her soul, Musgrave, just as Anne has starved mine. And now, at last, when we have seen our one chance of happiness, we cannot—cannot and will not—defer to any outworn tradition or the fear of Mrs. Grundy’s narrow-minded prattle!”

Charteris swept aside the crude dogmas of the world with an indignant gesture of somewhat conscious nobility, and turned toward his companion in an attitude of defiance. It was exquisite comedy. The men now understood each other perfectly; they were fighting for the woman in the bath-house, and each knew that every speech and action of the other was planned to appeal to her. Charteris paced the beach warily. Musgrave was smiling a little.

He smoked on very placidly for a few moments.

It was approaching sunset. The sun, a glowing ball of copper, hung low in the west over a rampart of dim, purple clouds, whose heights were smeared with red. A slight, almost imperceptible mist rose from the river, and, where the horizon should have been, a dubious cloudland prevailed. Far to the west were many orange-colored quiverings; nearer, the river dimpled with little, mica-tipped waves; and, at their feet, the water grew transparent, and plashed over the sleek, brown sand, and sucked back, leaving a curved line of bubbles that, one by one, winked and burst. There was a drowsy peacefulness in the air; behind them, among the beeches, were many stealthy wood-sounds, and, at long intervals, a sleepy, peevish twittering went about the nested trees. In Mr. Musgrave’s face, the primal peace was mirrored.

“May I ask,” said he, at length, “what you propose doing?”

It is more than probable that Mr. Charteris had had no definite plan in mind. It is very rarely necessary to form one in such cases; one drifts—drifts on the tide of circumstance that sets in with a strong, strong pull toward the realm of a certain personage, who is described as being not so black as he is painted. And the voyage, it is said, is very pleasant; the fare is collected at the other end of the trip, and is rumored to be excessive.

However this may have been, Charteris had passed the point of hesitation. Patricia was listening, and Patricia had no patience with half-measures. Mr. Charteris answered promptly. “I propose,” said he, “to ask Patricia to share the remainder of my life.”

“A euphemism, as I take it, for an elopement. I hardly thought you intended going so far.”

“Sir!” cried Charteris, drawing himself to his full height—he was not to blame for the fact that it was but five feet, six—“I am an honorable man! I cannot eat your salt, and steal your honor. I loot openly, or not at all.”

This was precisely what Musgrave had planned he should say. However, he shrugged his shoulders, carefully. "I suppose you've counted the cost—estimated the necessary breakage?"

"True love," the novelist declared, in a hushed, sweet voice, "is above such considerations."

"I think," said Musgrave, slowly, "that any love worthy of the name will always estimate the costs—to the woman. It's of Patricia I'm thinking."

"She loves me," Charteris murmured. He glanced up, and laughed lightly, for he believed now that he was winning. "Upon my soul, you know, I can't help thinking the situation a bit farcical—you and I talking over matters in this fashion. But I honestly believe the one chance of happiness for any of us hinges on Patricia and me chucking the whole affair, and bolting."

"It won't do—no, hang it, Charteris, it won't do!" Musgrave glanced toward the bath-house, and lifted his voice a little. "I'm not considering you, in the least—under the circumstances, you couldn't expect me to do that. It's of Patricia I'm thinking. I haven't made her happy. Our marriage was a mistake, I grant you—a hideous mistake. It's a nasty tangle altogether, but one mustn't cry over spilt milk. And it rests with us, the two men who—who love her, to decide what is best for Patricia. It's she, and only she, we must consider."

"Ah, you are right!" said Charteris, and his eyes grew tender. "She must have what she most desires; all must be sacrificed to that." He turned and spoke as simply as a child. "Of course, you know, I shall be giving up a great deal for her, but—I am willing."

Musgrave looked at him for a moment. "H'm, doubtless," he assented. "Why, then, we won't consider the others. We won't consider your wife, who—who worships you. We won't consider the boy. I—I, for my part, think it's a mother's duty to leave an unsullied name to her child, but, probably, my ideas are *bourgeois*. We won't consider Patricia's parents,

who, perhaps, will find it rather unpleasant. In short, we must consider no one save Patricia."

"Of course, one can't make an omelet without breaking eggs." Mr. Charteris looked rather sulky; he was beginning to realize that his opponent held some very strong cards, if he chose to play them properly.

"No; the question is whether it is absolutely necessary to make the omelet. I say no."

"And I," quoth Charteris, smiling gently, "say yes."

"For Patricia," Musgrave went on, as in meditation, but speaking very clearly, "it means giving up—everything. It means giving up her friends and the life to which she is accustomed; it means being ashamed to face those who were formerly her friends. We—the world, our world, I mean—are lax enough as to the divorce question, heaven knows, but we can't pardon immorality coupled with poverty. And you'll be poor, you know. Your books are very clever, Mr. Charteris, but—as I happen to know—the proceeds from them won't support two people in luxury; and Patricia has nothing. That's a sordid detail, of course, but it's worth considering. Patricia would never be happy in a three-pair back."

Mr. Charteris swallowed, before speaking. "Patricia has—nothing?"

"Bless your soul, of course not! Her father failed, you know, the year before we were married."

"I—I am a mere child in money-matters," Charteris reminded him. The novelist's voice was a little queer. "But—I understood—that failures were sometimes—profitable? And surely—some settlements——?"

"His failure wasn't." Musgrave had an irritating smile at times. Just now, he was offensively genial. "I don't mind telling you I had to lend him money in that affair to help him pay a decent percentage on the dollar. I—well, he's never been able to pay it back; he never prospered, somehow. And Patricia came to me without a penny. I never made any settlements on her, because I hadn't anything to

settle. What money I have comes from my uncle, you know, and I hold it only in trust for our boy, who's named after him. Patricia and I can't touch anything but the interest."

Mr. Charteris looked at him with eyes that were sad and hurt and wistful. "I am perfectly aware of your reason for telling me this," he said, candidly. "I know I have always been thought a mercenary man since my marriage. At that time, I fancied myself too much in love with Anne to permit any sordid considerations of fortune to stand in the way of our union. I—poor Anne! She little knows what sacrifices I have made for her! She, too, would be terribly unhappy if— Eh?"

"God help her—yes!" groaned Musgrave. He had forgotten, for the moment, the comedy they were playing.

Charteris had not.

"And Patricia—it would be unfair to condemn her to a life of comparative poverty. My—my books sell better than you think, Mr. Musgrave, but still an author cannot hope to attain affluence in these grasping days. We men of artistic tastes are apt to be somewhat hasty in our judgments. Since—since we have talked matters over, I—I really begin to think she might be happier with you." And Mr. Charteris's head sank resignedly upon his breast.

"I think so," Musgrave assented, calmly. "But, then, my opinion is, naturally, rather prejudiced and *bourgeois*."

"I perceive that you love her very tenderly." Mr. Charteris sighed, and passed his hand over his forehead in a graceful fashion. "I, also, love her far too dearly to imperil her happiness. It is true, I had hoped—ah, well, after all, we cannot utterly defy society! Its prejudices, though possibly unfounded, must be respected. I—I bid farewell to the dearest aspiration of my heart. You have my word of honor that henceforth I—I shall not—" Mr. Charteris held out his hand to seal the compact.

"Word of honor?" queried Mr. Musgrave, looking him in the face so intently that he, evidently, failed to perceive the proffered hand. "Why, then,

that's settled, and I'm glad of it. I told you, you know, it wouldn't do. See you at dinner, I suppose?"

And Rudolph Musgrave glanced at the bath-house, turned on his heel, and presently plunged into the beech plantation, whistling cheerfully. The effect of the melody was somewhat impaired by the apparent necessity of breaking off, at very frequent intervals, in order to smile.

The comedy had been well played on both sides; he did not object to Mr. Charteris's retiring with all the honors of war. Patricia, he thought, could not fail to have much the same opinion of the novelist as that which now interrupted her husband's whistling.

VII

WHAT THE RIVER WITNESSED

HE had not gone far, however, before he paused, thrust both hands into his trousers pockets, and stared down at the ground for a matter of five minutes. Patricia had a decided faculty for not seeing things she did not wish to see.

Musgrave shook his head. "After all," said he, "I can't trust them. Patricia is too erratic. The man will try to break off with her now, of course; but he's weak—weak as water. It isn't a nice thing to do, but—well, one must fight fire with fire."

Thereupon, he retraced his steps. When he had come to the thin spot in the thicket, Rudolph Musgrave left the path, and entered into the shrubbery. There, he sat down very composedly in the shadow of a small cedar. The sight of his wife upon the beach in converse with Mr. Charteris did not seem to surprise him.

She was speaking very quickly. She held a bedraggled parasol in one hand. Her husband noted, with a faint thrill of wonder, that, at times, and in a rather unwholesome, elfish way, Patricia was extraordinarily beautiful. Her green eyes glowed; they flashed sunlight purged of heat,

sunlight seen through a curving wave; her cheeks flushed, arbutus-like. The soft, white stuff that gownned her had the look of foam; against the gray sky she seemed a freakish spirit in the very act of vanishing. For sky and water were all one lambent gray by now. In the west was a faint, thin smear of orange; but, for the rest, the world was all gray. She and Charteris stood in the heart of a great pearl.

"Ah, believe me," she was saying, "Rudolph isn't a fool. He's cleverer than you think, Jack—oh, far cleverer! It was a comedy for my benefit, I tell you. He'll—he'll allow a great deal for the artistic temperament, no doubt, but he doesn't suppose you fetch along a white-lace parasol when you go to watch a sunset—especially a parasol he gave me last month."

"Indeed," protested Mr. Charteris, "he saw nothing. I was too quick for him."

She shrugged her shoulders. "I saw him looking at it. Accordingly, I paid no attention to what he said. But you—ah, Jack, you were so firm and manly! I suppose we shall have to elope at once now, though?"

Charteris evaded a direct answer. "I am not quite sure, Patricia, that your husband is not—to a certain extent—in the right. Believe me, he did not know you were about. He approached me in a perfectly sensible manner, and exhibited very commendable self-restraint; he has played a difficult part well. I could not have done it better, myself. And—and it is not for us who have been endowed with—with certain gifts denied to him, to reproach him for lacking the finer perceptions and sensibilities of life. Yet, I must admit that, for the time, I was a little hurt by his evident belief that I would allow my most sacred feelings to be influenced by mercenary considerations."

"He is a hopeless Philistine." She was not interested in the subject.

"He can't help that, you know," Charteris reminded her, gently; then, he asked, after a little: "I suppose it is all true?"

"What is true?"

"About your having no money of your own?" He laughed, lightly, though one could still see how deeply he had been pained by Musgrave's suspicions. "I ask, because, as your husband has discovered, I am utterly sordid, my lady, and care only for your wealth."

"Ah, how can you expect a man like that to understand—you? Why, Jack, how ridiculous in you to be hurt by what the brute thinks! You're as solemn as an owl, my dear. Yes, it's true enough. My father was unfortunate—and that horrid will—Ah, Jack, Jack, how grotesque, how characteristic it was, his thinking such things would influence you—you, of all men, who scarcely know what money is!"

"It was even more grotesque that I should have been pained by his thinking it," Charteris said, sadly. "The world always misunderstands, as we learn by experience. Yet—ah, my lady, you know that I would glory in the thought that I had given up all for you. You know, I think, that I would willingly work my fingers to the bone just that I might possess you always. I had dreamed of love in a cottage—an idyll of blissful poverty, where Love contents himself with crusts and kisses, and mocks at the proverbial wolf on the door-step. But I perceive now that I have been guilty of selfishness—the vice that of all others I most abhor. Your delicate, tender beauty, my lady, is unfitted to face the unlovely realities and petty deprivations and squalid makeshifts of such an existence. I would glory in them—ah, luxury and riches mean little to me, my dear, and I can conceive of no greater happiness than to starve with you. But true love knows how to sacrifice itself. Your husband was right; it would not be fair to you, Patricia."

"You—you are going to leave me?"

"Yes; I am strong enough to relinquish you, the one joy of my lonely life, because I love you better than

my life, Patricia—better than my immortal soul!”

“Ah, my dear!” she cried. Musgrave’s heart was sick within him as he heard the same notes in her voice that echoed in Anne’s voice when she spoke of her husband. This was a new Patricia; her shrill speech was low and gentle now, and her eyes held a light Rudolph Musgrave had never seen there. “Ah, my dear, you are the noblest man I have ever known; I wish we women could be brave and strong like men. But, oh, Jack, Jack, don’t be quixotic! I can’t give you up, my dear—that would never be for my good. Think how unhappy I’ve been all these years; think how—how Rudolph is starving my soul! I want to be free, Jack; I want to live my own life. You’ve shown me a glimpse of what life might be; don’t let me sink back into the old, humdrum existence from a foolish sense of honor! I tell you, I should go mad! I want you, Jack—just you! I don’t fear poverty. You could write some more wonderful books. I could work, too, Jack, dear. I—I could teach music or—or something. Lots of women support themselves, you know. Ah, Jack, we would be so happy! Don’t be honorable and brave and disagreeable, Jack, dear!”

Charteris was silent for a moment. His nostrils widened a little, and a curious look came into his face. He discovered something in the sand that interested him. “After all,” he said, slowly, “is it necessary—to go away—to be happy?”

“I—I don’t understand.” Her hand lifted from his arm; then, a quick remorse smote her, and it fluttered back, confidingly.

Charteris rose to his feet. “It is, doubtless, a very spectacular and very stirring performance to cast your cap over the windmill in the face of the world; but, after all, is it not a bit foolish, Patricia? Lots of people manage these things—more quietly.”

“Oh, Jack!” Patricia’s face went red, then white, and stiffened in a sort of sick terror. She was a frightened

Columbine in stone. “I thought you cared for me—really, not—that way.” Mrs. Musgrave rose and spoke with perfect composure. “I think I’ll go back to the house, Mr. Charteris. It’s a bit chilly here. You needn’t bother to come.”

Then, Mr. Charteris laughed—a little, choking, sobbing laugh. He raised his hands impotently toward heaven. “And to think,” he cried, “to think that a man may love a woman with his whole heart—with all that is best and noblest in him—and she understand him so little!”

“I do not think I have misunderstood you,” Patricia said, in a crisp voice. “Your proposition was very—very explicit.”

“And you really believed that I could sully the great love I bear you by stooping to—that! You really believed that I would sacrifice to you my home-life, my honor, my prospects—all that a man can give—without testing the quality of your love! You did not know that I spoke to try you—you actually did not know! Ah, yours is a light nature, Patricia! I do not reproach you, for you are only as your narrow Philistine life has made you. But I had hoped better things of you, Patricia. You have pained me beyond words.” And he sank down on the log, and buried his face in his hands.

She came to him—it was pitiful to see how she came to him, laughing and sobbing all in one breath—and knelt humbly by his side, and turned her grieved, shamed, penitent face to his. “Forgive me!” she wailed; “oh, forgive me!”

“You have pained me beyond words, Patricia,” he repeated. He was not angry—only sorrowful and very, very hurt.

“Ah, Jack! dear, dear Jack, forgive me!”

Mr. Charteris sighed. “I forgive you, Patricia,” he said; “you did not know.”

She was happy now. “Dear boy,” she murmured, “don’t you see it’s just these constant proofs of the greatness

and nobility of your love—? Really, though, Jack, wasn't it too horrid of me to misunderstand you so? Are you quite sure you've forgiven me entirely—without any nasty little reservations?"

Mr. Charteris was quite, quite sure. His face was still sad, but it was benevolent.

"Don't you see," she went on, "that it's just these things that make me care for you so much, and feel quite sure we'll be happy? Ah, Jack, we'll be so unutterably happy that I'm almost afraid to think of it!" Patricia wiped away the last tear, and laughed, and added, in a matter-of-fact fashion: "There's a train at six-five in the morning; we can leave by that, before any one is up."

Charteris started. "Your husband loves you," he said, at length. His tone was a little uncertain—she was very beautiful.

"Bah, I tell you, that was a comedy for my benefit," she protested, laughing. She was unutterably happy now, because she, and not he, had been in the wrong. "Poor Rudolph!—he has such a smug horror of the divorce-court that he'll even go so far as to make love to his own wife in order to keep out of it. Really, Jack, both of our better-halves are horridly commonplace and eminently suited to each other. They will be much better off without us."

"He has my word of honor," said Mr. Charteris.

Really, though, she was very beautiful. She was April embodied in sweet flesh; her soul was just a little wisp of April cloud, and her life an April shower, half sun that only seemed to warm, and half rain that only played at raining; but she was very beautiful. Surely, it would be a brave and—yes, an agreeable exploit—to give up everything for such a woman; it would be like Antony at Actium. It would be an interesting episode in one's Life and Letters; such things were pardonable, even characteristic, in the artistic temperament. It seemed to Charteris just then that

they would surely get on, somehow. And—and she was very beautiful.

"He has my word of honor," Mr. Charteris repeated. It sounded like a question.

"Ah, does that matter?" she cried. "Does anything matter, except just that we love each other? I tell you, I've given the best part of my life to that man, but I mean to make the most of what there is left. He has had my youth, my love—there was a time, you know, when I actually fancied I cared for him—and he has only made me unhappy. I hate him, I loathe him, I detest him, I despise him! I never intend to speak to him again—oh, yes, I shall have to at dinner this evening, but that doesn't count. And I tell you, I mean to be happy in the only way that's possible. Every one has a right to do that. A woman has an especial right to take her share of happiness in any way she can, because her hour of it is so short. A woman can be really happy through love alone, Jack, dear, and it's only when we're young and good to look at that men care for us; after that, there's nothing left but to take either to religion or duplicate whist. Yes—yes, they all grow tired after a while. Oh, Jack, I'm only a vain and frivolous woman, but I love you very much, my dear, and I solemnly swear to commit suicide the moment my first wrinkle arrives. You shall never grow tired of me, my dear. Jack, kneel down at once, and swear that you're perfectly sore with loving me, as that ridiculous person says in Dickens, and whose name I never could remember. Oh, I forgot—Dickens caricatures nature, doesn't he, and isn't read by really cultured people? You will have to educate me up to your level, Jack, and I warn you in advance I am hopelessly stupid. Yes, I am quite aware that I'm talking nonsense, and am on the verge of hysterics, thank you, but I rather like it. It's because I'm going to have you all to myself for the future; the thought makes me quite drunk. Will you kindly ring for the patrol-wagon, Jack? Jack, are you

quite sure you love me? Are you perfectly certain you never have loved any one else half so much? No, don't answer me, for I intend to do all the talking for both of us for the future! I shall tyrannize over you frightfully, and you will like it. All I ask in return is that you will be a good boy—no, I mean a naughty boy—and do solemnly swear, promise and affirm that you will meet me at the side-door at half-past five in the morning, with a portmanteau and the intention of never going back to your wife. You swear it? Thank you so much! And, now, I think I should like to cry for a few minutes, and, after that, we will go back to the house, before dinner is over and my eyes are perfectly crimson."

In fact, Mr. Charteris had consented. Patricia was irresistible as she pleaded and mocked and scolded and coaxed and laughed and cried, all in one bewildering breath. Her plan was very simple; it was to slip out of Kingsland at dawn, and walk to the near-by station. There they would take the train, and snap their fingers at convention. It sounded impossible, but she demonstrated its perfect practicability. And Mr. Charteris consented.

Rudolph Musgrave sat in the shadow of the cedar with mighty emotions whirling in his soul. He had never thought seriously of this contingency. He had never dared to hope for this.

VIII

A VOICE IN THE DARK

WHEN they had left the beach, Musgrave parted the underbrush, and leaped down upon the sand. He felt a bit queer. He must have air—air and an open place wherein to fight this out.

Night had risen about him in bland emptiness. There were no stars overhead, but a patient, wearied, ancient moon pushed through the clouds. The trees and the river conferred with one another, doubtfully.

He paced up and down the beach.

"They're going—they're actually going to-morrow! Think for a little of what that means, Rudolph Musgrave! I tell you, man, you've but to wait—only to wait!—and, without the lifting of your finger, there comes to you liberty and the chance of winning Anne. You can marry Anne. Think of that for a little, Rudolph Musgrave!"

He paused, and bestowed a crooked smile upon the moon.

"This shifting of partners undoubtedly savors of French farce. Man, man, it brings you all you've ever dreamed of, all you've ever hoped for, all you've ever imagined life could possibly mean! It brings you Anne. Isn't that worth the price you pay? Dear God in heaven, may a man not be deaf, dumb, blind, for a few hours when it brings him his heart's desire? Is it so great a crime when—when, after all, it may be the best possible solution of this hideous tangle?"

Up and down, up and down. Anne's face floated in the darkness. Her voice whispered through the lispings of the beeches, through the murmur of the water.

"It is so ridiculously simple. No one could blame me. No one could know—no one could possibly know. 'Mr. Musgrave had perceived with great grief the infatuation of the misguided couple. Oh, my dear, I assure you, he had remonstrated with his wife in the most feeling manner. He had even spoken, very temperately and very reasonably, I am told, to Charteris. No one could possibly blame him, my dear. Society only commiserates his present painful position, and congratulates him on being freed from such a—creature.' Thus Mrs. Grundy speaks over the tea-cups, and my position is impregnable. Yes, it is very simple."

Musgrave laughed a little in the darkness. His heart was racing, racing in him, and his thoughts were blown foam.

"Anne cares for me—not as she cares for her husband, but it is an ideal Charteris she loves—a Charteris

who exists only in her imagination. Let the man be once stripped of his disguise—as he will be to-morrow—let him once appear in his true colors, the lying, weak, unmitigated cad that he is, and will her love endure? Impossible! For Patricia is not the first; there was that Italian countess and the others that he explained so satisfactorily. I think these explanations will be gone over more carefully to-morrow. He has never loved Anne. He has been untrue to her from the first. He married her for her money. These things she will know to-morrow. Could any love for him survive that knowledge? Impossible! And she will still care for me. Yes, it is very simple.”

Up and down, up and down; then, a quick halt.

“Stop a bit, Rudolph Musgrave! It is her ideal of Charteris she loves; granted. Isn't it an ideal of you she cares for? Is it the real man—the man here by this river? Would she care, think you, for the man prepared to wink at his own dishonor, the man plotting to put a stain upon his son's name, the man—the real man, in short? You know the answer, Rudolph Musgrave. That, too, is very simple.”

Musgrave laughed, suddenly. He raised his hat, and bowed fantastically in the darkness.

“Signor Lucifer, I present my compliments. You have discoursed with me very plausibly. I honor your cunning, signor, but if you are indeed a gentleman, as I have always heard, you will now withdraw and permit me to regard the matter from a standpoint other than my own. For the others are weak, signor; as you have doubtless discovered, good women and bad men are the weakest of their sex. I am the strongest among them; the matter must rest with me.”

Up and down, up and down—the hands held behind him now, the heart still racing.

“First, as to Charteris—well, I don't think I need consider Charteris.”

Another laugh. Then, up and down

as before, the heart slackening a little.

“Second, as to Patricia. Patricia, I have heard from her own lips, hates me, loathes me, detests me. She has never been happy with me—never from the first. She never will be, that is certain. Will she be happy; with Charteris? I doubt it, yet there is a chance. She cares for him; and, incredible as it may seem, the man actually cares enough for her to brave poverty; he cares as much as he is capable of caring. One can do no more; and I shall see to it that they do not starve. Ah, they shall have money, if that is all that is necessary to complete their happiness! Yes; setting aside certain old-world notions of honor, I think I might, with a clear conscience, let Patricia go. The man is clever, and she may never find him out. She would have her chance of happiness; otherwise, she has none.”

The heart drops a beat; makes up for it, and then slackens slowly, slowly.

“Remains Anne. Ah, Rudolph Musgrave, face the facts without blinking! Is it not possible that, after the man has been exposed, stripped of his fine speeches and pretenses, shown up as the cheap mountebank he is—that, after all this, she may continue to love him? Such things have been, Rudolph Musgrave. Women have loved men far more vile than he is, and have died for love of them. You are convicted, it may be, by your own lips. ‘The man is clever, and she may never find him out!’ It rests with you—with you of all men!—to award her happiness or misery. Face the facts without blinking, Rudolph Musgrave! You must take lessons of this same cheap mountebank. ‘True love knows how to sacrifice itself’—the speech was true, though it came from a lying mouth. You must consider Anne's happiness, Rudolph Musgrave. Beside this, your happiness is a little thing, and the whims of a light man and a light woman are as nothing. It is she, and she alone, who is to be considered. If she may be rendered happy through your unhappiness, then you must be

unhappy; if she may be rendered happy through your dishonor, then you must be dishonored. If she desires this mountebank, then—she must have this mountebank."

The heart is normal now. He is very tired—physically tired, it seems to him—and the moon, looking down upon him, passionless, but inexorable, appears to await his decision. It is very, very hard to make.

"Lies, lies, lies! Why is it that the most honest of us dare not be truthful with ourselves? You know that Anne doesn't care for you, and never will care for you—that way. She loves the mountebank. And, as there is a God in heaven, she shall have her mountebank, and never know him for what he is! It's only fair—only fair and just. Anne's the only decent one among us; she's the only one who hasn't been nibbling at forbidden fruit. You've had your hour of happiness; now, you're going to pay for it. And Patricia? Ah, you've been lying, Rudolph Musgrave, lying hopelessly, pitifully! She can never be happy with Charteris, and you know it. When all is said and done, Patricia is your wife; Patricia is a light-minded little shrew, but Patricia is your wife. And you haven't made her happy, you know, though it doesn't take much to make Patricia happy. She wants only the petty things of life—the bodily comforts and a little flattery, and, it may be, a pretense of love. You could have given her these things very easily, Rudolph Musgrave; you still can give them to her. There's only one way to protect both Anne and Patricia—you must fight the liar with his own weapons. You've tried eavesdropping to-day; to-morrow, you must try lying. You must take lessons of the mountebank, Rudolph Musgrave! He has lied to his wife, and he has made her happy; you must do as he has done. That's the only way to protect both women—the woman you love, and the mother of your child. You can do it—you must do it. Afterward—well, Patricia will be content in her own fashion, and she will lead you rather

a devil of a life; and Anne will be happy with her mountebank, and she will be taught to despise you very cordially. The thing is settled."

And, having come to a decision, Rudolph Musgrave sat for a long while upon the deserted beach. The tumult had died out of his soul, and he was very, very tired.

IX

DESTINY LAUGHS

MUSGRAVE was, not unnaturally, late for dinner. At that meal and afterward, he observed with very faint interest that Charteris and Patricia avoided each other in a rather marked manner. Both seemed a trifle more serious than they were wont to be.

After dinner, Bob Townsend brought forth a mandolin, and the house-party sang songs, sentimental and otherwise, upon the piazza. Anne had disappeared somewhere. Musgrave subsequently discovered her in one of the drawing-rooms, puzzling over a number of papers which her maid had evidently just brought to her.

Mrs. Charteris looked up with a puckered brow, and then smiled. "Rudolph," said she, "haven't you an account at the Occidental Bank?"

"Hardly an account, dear lady—merely a deposit large enough to entitle me to receive monthly notices that I've overdrawn it."

"Why, then, of course, you've a cheque-book. Horrible things, aren't they?—such a nuisance remembering to fill out those little stubs. Of course, I forgot to bring mine with me—I always do; and equally, of course, a vexatious debt turns up and finds me without an Occidental Bank cheque to my name."

Musgrave smiled a little. "That," said he, "is easily remedied. I'll get you one; though even if— Ah, well, what's the good of trying to teach you adorable women anything about business! You shall have your indispensable blank form in three minutes."

He returned in rather less than that time, with the cheque. Anne was alone now. She was gowned in some dull, soft, yellow stuff, and sat by a small, marble-topped table, trifling with a fountain-pen.

"You mustn't sneer at my business methods, Rudolph," she said, pouting a little as she filled out the cheque. "It isn't polite, sir, in the first place, and, in the second, I am very, very methodical. Of course, I'm always losing my cheque-book, and drawing cheques, and forgetting to enter them, and I usually put down the same deposit two or three times—all women do that; but, otherwise, I am really very careful. I manage all the accounts; I couldn't expect Jack to do that, you know." Mrs. Charteris signed her name with a flourish, and nodded at him very wisely. "Dear boy, he's horribly impractical! Do you know, this bill has been due—oh, for months—and he forgot it entirely until this evening. Fortunately, he can settle it to-morrow; those disagreeable publishers of his have telegraphed for him to come to New York at once, you know. Otherwise—dear, dear, marrying a genius is absolutely ruinous to one's credit, isn't it, Rudolph? The tradespeople will refuse to trust us soon."

Involuntarily, Musgrave had seen the cheque. It was for a considerable amount, and it was made out to John Charteris. "Beyond doubt," said Musgrave, in his soul, "the man is colossal! He's actually drawing on his wife for the necessary expenses for running away with another woman! He's actually doing that!"

Musgrave sat down abruptly before the great, open fireplace, and stared very hard at the pine-boughs that were heaped up in it.

"A penny," said she, at length.

He glanced up with a little smile. "Dear lady, it would be robbery! For a penny, you may read of the subject of my thoughts in any of the yellow journals, only far more vividly set forth, and obtain a variety of more or less savory additions, to boot. I was thinking of the Lethbury case, and

wondering how we could have been so greatly deceived by the man."

"Ah, poor Mrs. Lethbury!" she sighed, quickly. "I am very sorry for her, Rudolph; she was a good woman, and was always interested in charitable work."

"Do you know," said Musgrave, with some deliberation, "it is she I cannot understand. To discover that he has been systematically deceiving her for some ten years; that, after making away with as much of her fortune as he was able to lay his hands on, he has betrayed business trust after business trust in order to—to maintain another establishment; that he has never cared for her, and has made her his dupe time after time, in order to obtain money for his gambling debts and other even less reputable obligations—she must realize all these things now, you know, and one would have thought no woman's love could possibly survive such a test. Yet, she's standing by him through thick and thin. Yes, I confess, she puzzles me. I can't understand her mental attitude." Musgrave was looking at Anne very intently as he ended.

"Of course," Anne said, simply, "she realizes it was all the fault of that—that other woman; and, besides, the—the entanglement has been going on only a little over eight years—not ten, Rudolph."

She was entirely in earnest; Musgrave could see that very plainly.

"I admit I had not looked on it in that light," said he, at length, and was silent for a moment. Then: "Upon my soul, Anne," he cried, "I believe you think the woman's only doing the natural thing, only doing the thing one had a right to expect of her, in sticking to that blackguard after she has found him out!"

Mrs. Charteris raised her eyebrows; she was really surprised. "Naturally, she must stand by her husband when he's in trouble; why, if his own wife didn't, who would, Rudolph? It is just now that he needs her most. She would be very, very wicked to desert him now."

Anne paused, and thought for a moment. "Depend upon it, she knows a better side of his nature than we can see; she knows him, possibly, to have been misled, or to have acted thoughtlessly; otherwise, she would not stand by him so firmly." Having reached this satisfactory conclusion, Anne began to laugh—at Musgrave's lack of penetration, probably. "So, you see, Rudolph, in either case, her conduct is perfectly natural."

"And this," he cried, "this is how women reason!"

"Am I very stupid? Jack says I'm a bit illogical at times. But, Rudolph, you mustn't expect a woman to judge the man she loves; if you call on her to do that, she doesn't reason about it; she—she just goes on loving him, and thinking how horrid you are. Women love men as they do children; they punish them sometimes, but only in deference to public opinion. A woman will always find an excuse for the man she loves. If he deserts her, she is miserable until she succeeds in demonstrating to herself that it was entirely her own fault; after that, she is properly repentant, but far less unhappy; and she goes on loving him just the same."

Musgrave pondered over this. "Women are different," he said, appealingly.

"I don't know. I think that, if all women could be thrown with good men, they would all be good. All women want to be good; but there comes a time to each one of them when she wants to make a certain man happy, and wants that more than anything else in the world; and then, of course, if he wants—very much—for her to be bad, she will be bad. A bad woman is always to be explained by a bad man." Anne nodded, very wisely; then, she began to laugh, this time to herself. "I am talking quite like a book," she said. "Really, I had no idea I was so clever. But I've thought of this before, Rudolph, and been sorry—oh, very sorry—for those poor women who—who haven't found the right sort of man to care for."

"Yes." Musgrave's face was a little white now. He was breathing improperly, too. "You've been luckier than most, Anne," he said, at length.

"Lucky!" she cried, and that queer little thrill of happiness woke again in her voice. "Ah, you don't know how lucky I have been, Rudolph! I've never cared for any one except—well, yes, you, a great while ago—and Jack. And you're both good men. Ah, Rudolph, it was very dear and sweet and foolish, the way we loved each other, but you don't mind—very, very much—do you, if I think Jack's the best man in the world, and by far the best man in the world for me? He's so good to me; he's so good and kind and considerate to me, and, even after all these years of matrimony, he's always the lover. A woman appreciates that, Rudolph; she wants her husband to be always, always her lover, just as Jack is, and never to give in to her when she coaxes—because she only coaxes when she knows she's in the wrong—and never, never, to let her see him shaving himself. If a husband observes these simple rules, Rudolph, his wife will be a happy woman; and Jack does. In consequence, every day I live I grow fonder of him, and appreciate him more and more; he grows upon me just as a taste for strong drink might. Without him—without him—" Anne's voice died away; then, she faced Musgrave, indignantly. "Oh, Rudolph!" she cried, "how horrid of you, how mean of you, to come here and suggest the possibility of Jack's dying, or running away from me, or doing anything dreadful like that!"

Musgrave was smiling, but his face was very, very white now. "I?" said he, equably. "If you will reconsider, dear lady—"

"No," she conceded, after consideration, "it wasn't your fault. I simply ran on as I always do when I get started on the subject of Jack, and imagined all sorts of horrible and impossible things. I'm very morbid and very foolish, Rudolph; but, then, I'm in love, you know. Isn't it funny,

after all these years?" Anne asked with a smile, and then cried, in sudden penitence: "Don't—don't be angry, Rudolph!"

"My dear," he said, "I assure you, the emotion you raise in me is very far from resembling that of anger." Musgrave rose and laughed. "I say, you know, we'll create a scandal if we sit here any longer. Let's see what the others are doing."

That night, after the other guests had retired, Mr. Musgrave smoked a cigarette on the piazza. The moon was bright and chill overhead. After a while, Musgrave raised his face toward it, and laughed.

"Isn't it— isn't it funny?" he demanded, in a little, shaking whisper.

He was very human, you see. He was ready to sacrifice his own wishes, but he reserved the privilege of railing at Fate. He had known this was his last evening with Anne; he had spent it in probing his wound through and through, in making quite sure that the wound was there, in making quite sure that the wound was hopeless. Perhaps, he still retained some lingering hope; in a season of discomfort, most of us look vaguely for a miracle of some sort. And, at times, it comes, but, more often, not; life is not always a pantomime, with a fairy god-mother waiting to break through the darkness in a burst of glory, and reunite the severed lovers, and transform their enemies into pantaloons. In this case, it seemed quite certain that the fairy would not come.

Having demonstrated this to himself, Musgrave retired to bed. And there, being very human, he slept soundly.

X

A NEW DAY

THE day was growing strong in the maple-grove behind Kingsland. As yet, the climbing sun fired the topmost branches only, and flooded them with a tempered radiance through which

birds plunged and shrilled vague rumors to one another. Beneath, a green twilight still lingered—a twilight that held a gem-like glow, chill and lucent and steady as that of an emerald. Vagrant little puffs of wind bustled among the leaves, with a thin pretense of purpose, and then lapsed, and merged in the large, ambiguous whispering that went stealthily about the grove.

Rudolph Musgrave sat on a stone beside the road that winds through the woods toward the railway station, and smoked, nervously. He was disheartened of the business of living, and, absurdly enough, as it seemed to him, he was hungry.

"It's got to be done," he murmured, over and over again. "It's got to be done quietly and without the remotest chance of Anne's ever hearing of it, and without the remotest chance of it's ever having to be done again. I've about fifteen minutes in which to convince Patricia both of her own folly and of the fact that the man is an unmitigated cad, and to get him off the place quietly, so that Anne will suspect nothing. And I never knew any reasonable argument to appeal to Patricia, and the man will be desperate! Yes, it's a large contract, and I'd give a great deal—a very great deal to know how I'm going to fulfil it."

At this moment, his wife and Mr. Charteris, carrying two portmanteaus, came around a bend in the road not twenty feet from him. They were both rather cross. An elopement seemed silly in the clean, brave light of morning; moreover, Patricia had had no breakfast, and Charteris had been much annoyed by his wife, who had breakfasted with him, and had insisted on driving him to the station. It was an unimportant fact, but, perhaps, not unworthy of notice, that Patricia was carrying her own portmanteau.

The three faced one another in the cool twilight. The woods stirred lazily about them. The birds were singing on a wager now.

"Ah," said Mr. Musgrave, "so you've come at last. I've been expecting you for a long time."

Patricia dropped her portmanteau, sullenly. Mr. Charteris placed his carefully by the side of the road, and said, "Oh!" It was the only thing that occurred to him to say.

"Patricia," Musgrave began, very kindly and very gravely, "you're about to do a foolish thing. At the bottom of your heart, even now, you know you're about to do a foolish thing—a thing you will regret bitterly and unavailingly for the rest of time. You're turning your back on the world—on our world—on the one possible world you can ever be happy in. You can't be happy in the half-world, Patricia; you aren't that sort. But you can't come back to us then, Patricia; it doesn't matter what the motive was, what the temptation was, or how great the repentance is—you can't ever come back. That's the law, Patricia; perhaps, it isn't always a just law. We didn't make it, you and I, but it's the law, and we must obey it. Our world merely says you can't come back; that is the only punishment it awards you, for it knows, this wise old world of ours, that it's the bitterest that can ever be devised for you. Our world has made you what you are; in every thought and ideal and emotion you possess, you're a product of our world. You can't live in the half-world, Patricia; you're a product of our world that can never take root in that alien soil. Come back to us, Patricia! We may not always act justly, but, in the main, we're right. We must have clean-minded, honest women to be the mothers of our children. Come back to us, Patricia! You belong to us and not to the world you're sinking to. Ah, I know we seem a very careless and futile lot, at times; we prattle a great deal about customs and cravats and other trifles, and we're lax about many things; but not about this. We aren't always consistent; but, in the main, we're kindly and sensible, and we have the root of the matter. We must have

clean-minded, honest women to be the mothers of our children. Come back to us, Patricia!"

Musgrave shook himself all over, rather like a Newfoundland dog coming out of the water, and the grave note died from his voice. He smiled, and rubbed his hands together. "And now," said he, "I'll stop talking like a problem play, and we'll say no more about it. Give me your portmanteau, my dear, and upon my word of honor, you'll never hear a word further from me in the matter. Charteris, here, can take the train, just as he intended. And—and you and I'll go back to the house, and have a good, hot breakfast together. Eh, Patricia?"

She was thinking, unreasonably enough, how big and strong and clean her husband looked in the growing light. It was a pity Jack was so small. However, she faced Musgrave coldly. Charteris was lighting a cigarette, with a queer, contented look. He knew the value of Patricia's stubbornness now; still, he appeared to be using an unnecessary number of matches.

"I should have thought you would have perceived the lack of dignity, as well as the utter uselessness, in making such a scene," Patricia said, after a little pause. "We aren't suited for each other, Rudolph; it is better—far better for both of us—to have done with the farce of pretending to be. I am sorry that you—you still care for me. I didn't know that. But, for the future, I intend to live my own life." Patricia's voice faltered, and she stretched out her hand a little toward her husband. He looked so kind; he wasn't smiling in that way she never liked. "Surely—surely, that isn't so unpardonable a crime, Rudolph?" she asked, almost humbly.

"Ah, my dear," he answered, "it isn't unpardonable—it's impossible. You can't lead your own life, Patricia; none of us can. It's bound up with many others, and every rash act of yours, every hasty word of yours, must affect to some extent the lives of those who are nearest and most dear to you. Why, you haven't thought,

Patricia! It isn't merely a question of you and me and this man, here; it's a question of many, many others who must suffer for what you're about to do. What you're about to do will drag two old people down into the grave; it will cast a shadow over the life of a boy scarcely out of the cradle. You haven't thought of these things, my dear! Why, there's your father, Patricia; you're the one thing in the world that grim old man really cares about. You're the one person—the one person in all the whole wide world—who knows the way to his heart; are you going to use that knowledge to wound him there? There's your mother, Patricia; she's a good woman and a strict woman, but there's nothing, nothing you can do she won't pardon and find excuses for. Ah, she'll find excuses to give the world; but, deep down in her spotless heart, she won't believe a word of them. Deep down there, she will know that you, her only child, aren't the most beautiful and the most clever and the most immaculate woman in all the world. She's always thought you were, Patricia. And, when she knows better—do you realize what that knowledge means? It means death, Patricia."

Charteris inhaled, lazily; yet, he did not like the trembling about Patricia's mouth. Her hands, too, opened a little and shut tight before she spoke.

"It is too late now," she said, dully.

Patricia was remembering a time when Rudolph's voice always held that grave, tender note in speaking to her; it seemed a great while ago. And—and he was big and manly, just like his voice, Rudolph was; he looked very kind. Surely, those horrible things he was saying were not true; they couldn't be true. Desperately, Patricia began to count over the times her husband had offended her. Hadn't he talked to her in the most unwarrantable manner only yesterday afternoon? Or—or had she to him? Patricia began to realize that she had done a deal of the talking on that occasion.

"Not a bit of it!—oh, not a bit of

it!" Musgrave cried. His voice sank, persuasively. "Why, Patricia, you're only thinking the matter over for the first time. You've only begun to think of it. Why, there's the boy—our boy, Patricia! Surely, you hadn't thought of him?"

Ah, he had found the right chord, at last! It quivered and thrilled under his touch; the sense of mastery leaped in his blood. Of a sudden, he knew himself dominant, absolute. Her face went red and white, and her eyes fell before the blaze of his, that fixed her, compellingly.

"Now, honestly, just between you and me," he said, confidentially, "was there ever a better and braver and handsomer boy born in the world? Why, Patricia, surely, you wouldn't willingly—of your own accord—go away from him, and never see him again? Oh, you haven't thought, I tell you! Think, Patricia! Don't you remember that first day, when I came into your room, and he—ah, how wrinkled and red and old-looking he was then, wasn't he, little wife? Don't you remember how he was lying on your breast, and how I took you both in my arms, and held you close for a moment, and how for a long, long while there wasn't anything left of the whole wide world except just us three and God smiling down upon us? Don't you remember, Patricia? Don't you remember his first tooth?—why, we were so proud of it, you and I, as if there had never been a tooth before in all the history of the world! Don't you remember the first day he walked? Why, he staggered a great distance—oh, nearly two yards!—and caught hold of my hand, and laughed and turned back—to you. You—you didn't run away from him then, Patricia. Are you going to do it now?"

Silence. She struggled under his look. She had an absurd desire to cry, just that he might console her. She knew he would. Oh, why was it so hard to remember that she hated Rudolph! Of course, she hated him; she—oh, yes, she loved that other man yonder. His name was Jack. She

turned toward that gentleman, and the reassuring smile with which he greeted her, struck her as being singularly nasty. She hated both of them; she wanted only her boy—her soft, warm little boy who had eyes like Rudolph's.

"I—I—it's too late, Rudolph," she stammered, parrot-like. "If you'd only taken better care of me, Rudolph! If— It's too late, I tell you! You will be kind to him. I'm only weak and frivolous and heartless. I'm not fit to be his mother. I'm not fit, Rudolph! Rudolph, I tell you, I'm not fit! Ah, let me go, my dear!—in mercy, let me go! For I haven't loved the boy as I ought to, and I'm afraid to look you in the face, and you won't let me take my eyes away—you won't let me! Ah, Rudolph, let me go!"

"Not fit?" His voice thrilled with strength, and pulsed with many little tender cadences. "Ah, Patricia, I'm not fit to be his father! But, between us—between us, mightn't we do much for him? Come back to us, Patricia—to me and the boy! We need you, my dear. Ah, I'm only a stolid, unattractive man, I know; but you loved me once, and—I am the father of your child. I've been careless and I've neglected you, no doubt; but I'm the father of your child. You must—you *must* come back to me and the boy!" Musgrave caught her face between his hands, and lifted it toward his. "Patricia, don't make any mistake! There's nothing you care for so much as that boy. You can't give him up! If you had to walk over red-hot ploughshares to come to him, you would do it; if you could win him a moment's happiness by a lifetime of poverty and misery and degradation, you would do it. And so would I, little wife. That's the tie that unites us; that's the tie that's too strong ever to break. Come back to us, Patricia—to me and the boy."

"I—Jack, Jack, take me away!" she wailed, helplessly.

Charteris came forward with a smile. He was quite sure of Patricia now. "Mr. Musgrave," he said, with a faint

drawl, "if you have entirely finished your highly edifying and, I assure you, highly entertaining monologue, I will ask you to excuse us. I—oh, man, man!" Charteris cried, not unkindly, "don't you see it's the only possible outcome?"

Musgrave faced him, grimly. The glow of hard-earned victory was pulsing in his blood, but his eyes were chill stars. "Now, Mr. Charteris," he said, equably, "I'm going to talk to you. In fact, I'm going to discharge a highly agreeable duty toward you."

Musgrave drew very close to him. Charteris shrugged his shoulders; his smile, however, was not entirely satisfactory. It did not convince.

"I don't blame you for being what you are," Musgrave went on, curtly. "You were born so, doubtless. I don't blame a snake for being what it is. But, when I see a snake, I claim the right to set my foot on its head; when I see a man like you—well, this is the right I claim, Mr. Charteris!"

Thereupon, Musgrave struck Mr. Charteris in the face with his open hand. He was a strong man, and, on this occasion, he made no effort to curb his strength. "Now," Musgrave concluded, "you are going away from this place very quickly, and you are going alone. You will do this, because I tell you to do so, and because you are afraid of me. Understand, Mr. Charteris, that the only reason I don't give you a thorough thrashing is that I don't think you are worth the trouble. I only want Patricia to perceive exactly what sort of a man you are."

The blow staggered Charteris. Of a sudden, he seemed to grow smaller. His very clothes seemed to hang more loosely about him. His face went white, and the red mark showed very plainly upon it.

"Sir," said Mr. Charteris, "I am not here to engage in a vulgar brawl. You—you are beneath my notice. Come, Patricia!" And he turned to her, and reached out his hand.

She shrank from him. She drew away from him, without any vehe-

innence, as if he had been some slimy, harmless reptile. A woman does not love to see fear in a man's eyes; and there was fear in Mr. Charteris's eyes, for all that he smiled. Patricia's heart sickened in her. She loathed him, and she was a little sorry for him.

"Oh, you cur, you cur!" she gasped, in a wondering whisper. Patricia went to her husband, and held out her hands, timorously. She was afraid of him. She was proud of him, the strong, brave, victorious male animal. "Take me away, Rudolph," she said, simply; "take me away from that—that coward. Take me away, my dear. You may beat me, too, if you like, Rudolph. I have deserved it."

Musgrave took both her hands in his, very gently. He smiled at Charteris.

The novelist returned the smile, intensifying its sweetness. "I fancy, Mr. Musgrave," he said, "that, after all, I shall have to take that train alone." Mr. Charteris paused a moment; a new note came into his voice, and he spoke with some nobility. "It is only by an accident you have won, you know. I wasn't born with the knack of enduring physical pain; I am a coward, if you like; but I was born so. Personally, if I had been consulted in the matter, I should have preferred the usual portion of valor. However, you have won, and—and, after all, the woman is not worth fighting about." There was exceedingly little of the mountebank in him now; he kicked Patricia's portmanteau, very frankly and very viciously, as he stepped over it to lift his own. Holding it in one hand, Mr. Charteris spoke, this time, at least, honestly: "Mr. Musgrave, I have been much mistaken in you. You are a brave man—we physical cowards, you know, admire that above all things—and a strong man and a clever man; and, with all that, you are a good man. You have won your wife back in fair fight. I fancy, by the way, that you have rather laid up future trouble for yourself in doing so, but I honor the skill you have shown. Mr. Musgrave, it is to you

that I take off my hat." Thereupon, Mr. Charteris uncovered his head with perfect gravity, and turned on his heel, and went down the road, whistling melodiously.

Musgrave stared after him, for a while. The lust of victory died in him; the tumult and passion and fervor were gone from his soul. He could very easily imagine the things Charteris would say to Anne concerning him; he knew that she would believe them all. He had won the game; he had played it, heartily and skilfully and successfully; and his reward was that the old bickerings with Patricia should continue, and that Anne should be taught to loathe him. He saw it all very plainly as he stood, hand in hand with his wife. But Anne would be happy. It was for that he had played.

They came back to Kingsland almost silently. The spell of the dawn was broken; it was honest, garish day now, and they were both hungry.

Patricia's spirits were rising, as a butterfly's might after a thunderstorm. Her husband was evidently infatuated with her; she had dim visions of a larger allowance and Rudolph always carrying her wraps in public places. It would be very agreeable to have Rudolph for an escort, because he was so big and strong. He would have to give up smoking, though, now they were to see so much of each other; she never could bear the odor.

"Ah, Rudolph, Rudolph!" she cooed, "if I had only known all along that you loved me!"

"Dear Patricia," he protested, fondly, "it seemed such a matter of course." He was a little tired, perhaps; the portmanteau seemed very heavy.

"A woman likes to be told—a woman likes to be told every day. Otherwise, she forgets," Patricia murmured. Then, her face grew tenderly reproachful. "Ah, Rudolph, Rudolph, see what your carelessness and neglect had nearly led to! It nearly led to my running away with a man like—like that! It would have been all your

fault, Rudolph, if I had. You know it would have been, Rudolph." And Patricia sighed once more, and then laughed and became magnanimous. "Yes—yes, after all, you are the boy's father." She smiled up at him, very kindly and indulgently. "I forgive you, Rudolph," said Patricia.



A KISS

SWEETHEART, the simile is old
 In poetry and prose,
 Yet it must please you to be told
 Your mouth is like a rose.

For that red rose, the nightingale
 My heart has been for long,
 And not until its kisses fail
 Shall cease the lover's song.

O lips of love! O petals sweet!
 O rose of rhyme and bliss!
 Hear now the nightingale repeat
 The lyric of a kiss!

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN.



HIS BLACKSTONIAN CIRCUMLOCUTION

"I RECEIVED, this afternoon," said the bright-eyed, common-sense girl, the while a slight blush of maidenly coyness tinted her peach-hued cheeks, "a written proposal of marriage from Horace J. Pokelong, the rising young attorney, and——"

"Huh! that petrified dub!" jealously ejaculated the young drygoods dealer, who had been hanging back because of his timidity and excessive adoration.

"He says," proceeded the maiden, gently ignoring the interruption, and reading aloud from the interesting document, "'I have carefully and comprehensively analyzed my feelings toward you, and the result is substantially as follows, to wit: I respect, admire, adore and love you, and hereby give, grant and convey to you my heart and all my interest, right and title in and to the same, together with all my possessions and emoluments, either won, inherited or in any other manner acquired, gained, anticipated or expected, with full and complete power to use, expend, utilize, give away, bestow or otherwise make use of the same, anything heretofore stated, expressed, implied or understood, in or by my previous condition, standing, walk, attitude or actions, to the contrary notwithstanding; and I furthermore——'"

"I—I—I—" fairly shouted the listener, springing to his feet, and extending his arms. "Miss Brisk—Maud—I love you! Will you marry me?"

"Yes, I will!" promptly answered the lass, as she contentedly snuggled up in his encircling embrace. "And I'll reply to the ponderous appeal of that pedantic procrastinator with the one expressive slangism, 'Nit!' I am yours, Clarence!"

THE BELLS OF THE NATIONS

By Victor Plarr

GREAT DANTE heard the clock-bell in his time
“*Tin-tin sonando*,” in his lovely South—
Joyous, imperious, definite, sublime,
With Latin logic rung from Tuscan mouth!

In Ghent the carillon at midnight chants,
Longfellow heard, and sang of the “Roland,”
That, with mellifluous anger, shouts and pants
“When there is Victory in Guelderland”!

The Gauls have many a bell of voice divine;
Sweet bells has Germany. Alas, the chief
Stands broken in Schaffhausen by the Rhine:
’Tis Schiller’s “*Glocke*,” dumb beyond relief.

Another bell rings from the heathery heights
Of Cymric lands—who hears its anguished sound?—
Above the old bards, where never hand rewrites
The runes on their gray head-stones strown around.

The “lin, lan, long,” of twilight’s dreamy bell,
Tennyson heard, far-borne across the flats,
With mellow plaintive anamnestic swell,
Among the giant willows and dim bats.

Among the hoary, tortuous willows, bent
O’er the full windings of some fenland stream,
I, standing with my rod, have known it blent
With the long cadences of my day-dream!

From some tall tower, with windows lanceolate,
Rang that sweet English bell in gloaming deep.
Dark grew the neighbor water, dark as fate,
Broad-flowing, silent, mystical as sleep.

So from far Oxford, over the low fields,
Rings the grave music born in Christchurch old;
Gray surely heard it once, for still he yields
Its beat unto our sense from verse of gold.

So from old Washbourn Abbey, loud or low,
The wedding bells pealed, in their dulcet mirth,
On Coleridge, a long hundred years ago,
And brought his “Ancient Mariner” to birth.

Beside the Severn Sea that master walked
 With Wordsworth, English nature's lord of lords.
 How many gentle singers as they talked
 Have heard some English bell speak magic words!

Dignified England, where, bough-circled, sleep
 Old belfries, soft as dreams, with broken stairs,
 And long lit chancels, whence at evening creep
 Mutterings of sweet Elizabethan prayers!



THE WAY IT GOES

"I WAS over at Allegash, the other day, for the first time in four years," said the Kohack Philosopher, just a bit sarcastically, "and I found my nephew, Luther, and his estimable wife, still squabbling over the same question they were quarreling about when I was there before. The only change that I was able to detect was that, while in the first place they appeared to know what they were jangling about, by this time they seemed to have forgotten what the original bone of contention was, and were quarreling monotonously along without any way of knowing when they had finished.

"Well, when my appearance interrupted them, Luther was startled to see how much thinner I had grown in four years, and his wife was astonished at the way I had grown fat. And at it they went, quarreling over that, and the original question was shelved for good and all. I came away feeling amply repaid for taking the trip. It is a satisfaction to know that you have done a helpful act, and I expect I did them a great favor by breaking the monotony, and giving them something fresh to wrangle over."



THERE ARE MANY OF US

TOT—I fell down and bumped my nose.

MOTHER—And did you cry?

TOT—No; there wasn't anybody there.



NOT WORTH THE TROUBLE

"LORD NINNY thinks his brain is affected."

"Pooh! I wonder that he worries over a little thing like that."



LIGHT-HEARTED is usually a polite synonym of light-headed.

THE DIARY OF DEWDROP

By Onoto Watanna

THE fifth day of the eighth moon of the thirty-third year of Meiji.

"On the day of my betrothal, I shall begin a little journal of my insignificant life." This, I many a time told myself. "By that time," I thought, "I shall have ceased to be a child, and must exchange the laugh of girlhood for the serious problems of the woman."

To-day I am fifteen years old, and to-day I was betrothed. Pray, why is it, then, my honorable diary, that save for the tears I have wept this day my heart is still the heart of a child?

I can remember right back to my seventh birthday. I was then a tiny, small creature, with a flower ornament in my hair, and a red crêpe kimono tied about with a purple *obi*. My father took me by the hand, and together we crossed the fields until we came to the old-fashioned, but always beautiful, home of Count Kaneko. His little boy, Ido, who was but three years older than I, ran out to meet us, and pretended to chase me, so that I hid behind my father's *hakama*, and peeped at him with shy, glad eyes, for even at that early age I loved Kaneko Ido. All morning, we two played joyfully together, whilst our fathers smoked and talked.

On our way home, I begged my father to bring me more often to the Kaneko home, and I remember well the words with which my father answered me.

"Yes, little Dewdrop," he said, "you shall play as much as you wish with Ido. Some day, I shall give you to him for a bride."

I danced with delight at the prospect. And the years of our childhood passed like a glad song, and each of my succeeding birthdays, and, indeed, all the days between, were spent with my playmate and little lover, Ido. But, one day, a dreadful thing happened. My dear old father died, and trouble thereafter took up its abode with us; for, scarcely three years later, my beautiful mother married again, and I became the honorable stepdaughter of Yoshimori Genjiro, who was proud and cold and stern. From that day to this, I was kept under surveillance, for my stepfather disapproved of freedom in the life of a young girl; he banished Ido from our house, declaring that as he was a boy he was no fit companion for me, and bade me cultivate such qualities as humility, meekness, obedience, grace and gentleness. Shortly afterward, Ido left the town to attend some big college in Kumamoto; but he wrote me a sweet love-letter before leaving, swearing that he would return some day, and claim me as his little bride, as our fathers had promised.

And I waited days and weeks and months, and then years for him, but he came not back to me, though I prayed to all the gods that they would give me back again my little high-born lover.

Yesterday, my august stepfather said to me:

"The honorable Shinobu family have formally asked for thy unworthy hand to be given in marriage to their honorable son, Shinobu Taro. Tomorrow, you shall accompany me to their august palace, where the family

desire to hold a look-at meeting with you, subsequent to the betrothal."

"But," protested my mother, with some surprise, and despite her respect and fear of her lord, "the Shinobu family are of low caste, and Dew-drop's father was a descendant of one of the proudest families in Japan."

"Just because our family is of the nobility," said my father, coldly, "that is the reason the Shinobu family wish to be allied with us. They own hundreds of rice-fields, and are the richest parvenus in the country. Our poverty is unbecoming to our rank. Our unworthy daughter shall restore us to our rightful splendor."

After making this long speech, my stepfather glared at us icily, and then added, turning directly to me:

"You are a very fortunate girl."

I bowed, obediently, before him, murmuring my filial submissiveness to his will; but to myself I was saying over and over again:

"What shall I do? What shall I do?" For I was thinking of Ido. And, when my august stepfather gave me permission to return to my room, I crept from his presence like one whose spirit is broken, and I fell down before the little shrine in my room, and, stretching my hands imploringly upward to the pitying face of Kwannon, I begged that she would have mercy upon me.

This morning, my old dear servant, Madame Summer, awoke me with her weeping. She had come to dress me for the odious meeting which I was to have that day with my future husband. The poor old woman wept bitterly, for she feared that, like my mother, I might marry some one who was taciturn and unkind.

"Do not weep, dear my old friend," I consoled her, in my sweetest voice; "wherever I go, I shall have you always with me. Now, dress me, and be sure, dear Madame Summer, that you make me very beautiful, for this is my betrothal morn, and, besides, I am fifteen years old to-day." And with that I fell to laughing; but my mirth ended in tears.

Shinobu Taro, my future lord, lives in a big, ugly palace, overcrowded with costly new furniture. His mother has cruel eyes. I shall be her slave, doubtless, when once I become her daughter-in-law. His father has a big, coarse, red face, and little, keen eyes that look at me in the same calculating fashion in which, I am sure, he regards the wares in his stores. Shinobu Taro himself is perfumed and greased all over, just as if he were some geisha girl or actor; and he has sly, proprietary eyes, like his father, and a cruel mouth, like his mother. He paid me extravagant compliments as to my beauty and virtue, but his compliments were as ungraceful as himself. We exchanged marriage presents, I giving him a sword of one of my ancestors, and he presenting me with a priceless kimono of the brightest red and yellow shades. Besides this, his family surfeited us with countless other gifts, so that we were forced to borrow five of their servants to carry them home with us.

After all the foolish compliments had been exchanged between us, we returned to our home, my stepfather in high spirits, my mother meek and timid as ever, and I in pale silence.

It is raining now, and Summer rain always makes me melancholy and sad. Such sweet, soft, slow, oppressive rain! I opened a sliding door of my chamber, and looked out at it with a miserable face. My little garden, with the drops like tears upon the leaves and flowers, seemed to look up at me pityingly in the twilight, for, despite the rain, mellow sunset had tinged the sky, and it was still quite light.

I suddenly began to weep, in thought that I must so soon leave my dear home, and my tears were like the rain—quiet, subdued, unavailing.

THE NEXT DAY

When I awoke to-day, the morning was tapping at my blinds, so that I opened them wide to receive the air and sunshine. The rain had all passed

away, and the flowers, in their bright dryness, had lost their look of sympathy.

"Ah," I sighed, "they are fickle as a child, whose tears are for the moment only. I will not look at them. They are hard and cold and soulless." And, with that, I was about to close my shades petulantly, when a voice sprang out of the garden, and, from behind an old cherry-tree, a young man's face smiled up at me like the rising sun.

"Good morning, Dewdrop! Won't you come down and play with me? I shall teach you how to fly my old Chinese kite, and, if you are very good, I shall take you out in my small sail-boat, and you will be the daughter of the dragon king, and I the fisher-boy Urashima, and we shall sail away until we find the shores of the island 'where Summer never dies.'"

"Oh, Ido, Ido, Ido! is it really you?" I cried out.

He came close under my window, and blew kisses at me, as he used to do when a little boy. My hair was all about me like a mantle of lacquer, or a cloud about the moon, and I knew my cheeks were flaming like the poppies in my garden.

"Ah!" said Ido, softly, "you are more beautiful than ever, my little love. You are the sun-goddess! Behold me! I worship thee!"

"Hush!" I whispered; "do not joke, dear Ido, now; but tell me, where did you come from?"

"Oh, dear my little friend," he cried, in a joyous voice, "I have dropped down at your feet from another planet."

"No, no, pray do not laugh at me," I beseeched, so earnestly that he quickly changed his tone.

"Well, I have just returned from a long sojourn in the West. I have been in Germany, in France, in England, and even in America. And I have come back now to the Land of God and Home and Beauty, and—to you, Dewdrop!"

"Me?" I whispered, wistfully; and then I heard my stepfather's voice,

and all of a sudden I remembered everything, and my teeth began to chatter with fright and misery.

"Go! go away quickly, dear Ido! Here comes my august stepfather, and he will surely kill me if he catches me."

But Ido stood his ground fearlessly and bravely. "And why, pray, may I not speak to my old playmate?" he asked.

"Because—because—yesterday I was—because—oh, Ido, just because!" I answered him, for I could not bring the words to tell him of my betrothal.

I closed the shutters sharply in his face. A few minutes later, I made a little peephole with my finger through them, and peered out, with bated breath. He was still waiting there, his head thrown back, his arms folded across his breast. He looked like the statue of a young god.

Just then, Madame Summer entered my chamber, and I rushed to her and frantically besought her to get rid of the boy, but to tell him nothing of my betrothal. I would tear her to pieces, I promised her, if she did so.

Later in the day, when I drove out in my *jirikisha* to go to the city to purchase material for my wedding garments, Ido stepped from out a small wood close to our house, and, stopping the runner with a peremptory voice, he spoke to me distantly and proudly.

"You have changed much, my old friend," he said. "It is true that your beauty of face has increased with the years, but how is it with the beauty of your soul? I do not recognize you in your new pride, which ill becomes my little friend Dewdrop."

I leaned far out of the vehicle. "No, no, dear Ido!" I breathed, so softly that the runner might not hear me; "I am the same little Dewdrop to you, always and ever. I pray that you will think kindly of me."

His face lighted up gloriously in a moment, and he stood aside for my runner to pass, with a courtly, graceful bow for me.

ONE WEEK LATER

All day long, I have been sewing and embroidering on my wedding garments. My fingers are all pricked and sore, and my mother declares I have grown clumsy and stupid. She does not know that I am trembling with excitement and nervousness. For, oh, that voice in the early morning!

"Dewdrop!" he calls softly, with his lips right close to the thin, partitioned window; and then again, a little louder, "Dewdrop!"

I shrink back behind a screen, quivering. If my august stepfather should awake and stroll through the garden! How good were the gods to place the trees so close together!

"Dewdrop!" How sweet and winning his voice is! How different from the guttural, stupid sound of that hideous Shinobu Taro's!

"Dewdrop! Are you awake yet?" Silence a brief time, and then: "I have been waiting here since sunrise. I thought I heard you move. Pray, if you are indeed awake, will you not come out to me a little moment only?"

Again silence.

"Just one glance at your face!"

He waits in vain for even one little word or sign from me. Then, he taps hard on the metal gable.

"Dewdrop! Little Dewdrop!"

I creep from the room with stealthy step. I fling myself, sobbing, into Madame Summer's arms.

"Oh, go to him, dear Madame Summer! Tell him the honorable lie—that I am away visiting—that I am ill—that I am dead, even!"

Such a long, heavy day! I thought that the sun would never, never go down, and that it was making mock of my misery. Every stitch I sewed pricked not only my fingers but my heart. A few tiny red drops fell on some silken *omeshi*.

My mother scolded me, shrilly. "Stupid girl! That is no way to hold the honorable needle. Is all my teaching to come to nothing? See how your fingers are bleeding!"

"It is my heart!" I said, within me.

Twice to-day, I have applied my eye to the little hole in my shutter. I do not see him, but I feel his presence. He is somewhere near me. What does he think of me? What can he think?

To-night, I coaxed Madame Summer to go out with me for a little stroll in the moonlight. As we were stealing from the house, my stepfather, who was drinking, heard us. He called out, drowsily:

"Where are you going, my honorable daughter?"

He addresses me so since my betrothal. He used to call me, "unworthy daughter."

"For just a little maiden walk with the stars, dear my honorable father," I returned; "Madame Summer accompanies me."

"It is well," he answered, still more drowsily.

Ido followed behind us all the way. Some naughty spirit caught hold of my tongue, and I rattled on continuously to my old nurse, laughing merrily at the smallest provocation, and making much fun and nonsense at all things.

Ido said never a word to us; he merely followed close behind. I wonder whether he feared old Madame Summer; or was it his honorable respect for little insignificant me?

A WEEK LATER

I dreamed all night long of the morning when I should hear that voice calling me. From the sheer force of my dreams, I awoke before daylight, and there I lay for what seemed an interminable length of time, waiting and listening. Not even the tiniest whisper of my name! Three times I arose, and crept to the window, and peered out, wistfully, and three times I returned to my couch, there to toss and turn and complain. "Why does he not come any more? He has not been near me since that night when he followed me, and I laughed and mocked and made light of all things."

Finally, I drowsed off again, know-

ing I should awaken if he but breathed my name without. But, when I awoke, there was no sound. Again, I crept to the window. No boyish face was without to welcome me with eager, beseeching words of love. But something lay on my window ledge—something that made my heart stop beating, because of its rapture and pain commingled. It was a huge bunch of cherry blossoms, skilfully and carefully arranged. I knew their message. I do had resorted to this, the old, sweet method of asking me to become his wife.

With trembling fingers, I slid back my blinds, and, bending over the flowers, buried my face in them. Then, I drew them close into my arms. As I took them in, he came out from behind the cherry-tree, his face ecstatic with hope and happiness.

"See, ah, see, dear Madame Summer!" I cried, waking her, as usual; "his flowers for me! You understand?"

She took hold of them sharply. "Go put them right back, quickly!" she said. "You foolish girl! Do you not understand that he will conclude that you have accepted him?"

"Ah, but he has already seen me take them in," I declared, clinging to my happiness, piteously.

She took the flowers from me, scoldingly, and herself replaced them.

TWO DAYS LATER

To-day, he placed a scroll where the flowers were. How could I resist taking it in? I did so, laying it flat on the floor, as my shaking hands would have made it impossible to read it otherwise.

It was a poem. My beauty, grace, goodness, virtue, was its theme.

I piteously besought Madame Summer to let me keep it. But, on the threat that she would tell everything to my stepfather otherwise, I was forced to relinquish this treasure also to her. She relentlessly replaced it. She says he will understand now, as he has been refused twice.

"But once more," I encourage my-

self, "yes, three times, of course, he must ask me."

THE NEXT DAY

I sat up all night long. Madame Summer, too, came into my room, meaning to be kind with her firmness. She fears something dreadful will happen to me.

I took in his fresh flowers. I knew it would be the last time. I hid them from Madame Summer. If she finds them, she will again replace them. Then, he will become discouraged. Maybe, he will then go far away, and never return to me again.

THE NEXT DAY

To-morrow, I am to be married. All my friends in the village come up to the house to visit me now each day, and they say pleasant and flattering things to me. They actually envy me! Me!

I have gone to my blossoms fifty times to-day, and have kissed them, and wept over them.

I wonder whether Shinobu will permit me to keep just this one little bunch of flowers? Maybe, if I go down humbly on my knees to him, and beg him to grant this little favor, he may allow me to keep just one little blossom.

I am keeping this, my little diary, in the sleeve of my kimono. On my wedding-day, I shall write "*Finis*" at the end of it; for, like my life, will it not have indeed ended? Poor little short-lived diary! Poor little short life!

THE WEDDING-DAY

Early this morning, Madame Summer found my flowers. I threw myself prostrate at her feet, just as if she were my almighty mistress, instead of my servant. She raised me up tenderly, and tried to console me. I clung hysterically to my flowers.

"If you take them from me, Madame Summer, I will kill you, and sell your soul to some wicked fiend in a horrible pass to the hades."

She wrested the flowers from my hands, despite my threats and entreaty. Then, she threw them out of the window.

"Wild girl!" she said; "you will ruin yourself!"

Down-stairs, in the presence of my august stepfather, I tried to summon all my hereditary courage and filial obedience to his commands. But, as he spoke to me in his kindest voice, I kept saying to myself, over and over again:

"Now, Ido has just found the flowers; he has just picked them up!"

"You will be a great lady," said my stepfather.

"Maybe, he is weeping," I thought.

"And you must not forget your honorable parents."

"Perhaps, he is cursing me." And, at this thought, I all but fainted as I kept bowing my assents to my stepfather.

"Dear my honorable parent, will you permit me to pluck with my own hands a little bunch of flowers in a field only a short distance away?"

"Have your own wish in all things to-day," said my stepfather, graciously.

I tried to stay my wild feet, which were longing to fly from his sight immediately. I felt faint as I reached the little gate; but, when it banged to behind me, all my courage returned. I told myself that I was the daughter

of a long line of brave men, notable for their fearlessness and courage. Should I, then, not be worthy of them?

Where was Ido? That was my next thought.

Ah, I could see him slowly climbing the hill, his flowers hanging sadly in his hand.

I ran like the wind after him, and I called, panting as I ran:

"Ido! Ido!"

He turned like a flash, and, like a flash, his pale face grew suddenly luminous.

"*Anata!*" (Thou!)

"The flowers!" My breath failed me.

"Ah, you have returned them again?" he inquired, sadly.

"No, no, no, dear Ido!" I cried, frantically. "Give them to me! I must have them! Don't you know, Ido? My august stepfather is marrying me to-day to Shinobu Taro, whom I hate and loathe. I have come to you——"

"Ah-h-h!" he said, slowly; "I understand now."

His serious face lighted up. "Dew-drop," he whispered, "yesterday, I purchased a ticket on the steamer *Belgic*, against the event of your refusing me. Will you go with me now to America?"

"To the end of the world, and beyond!" I said.



ECONOMY

FIRST DOCTOR—Well, did old Miserly survive the operation?

SECOND DITTO—No; he refused to undergo it. He said he could save money by dying.



Gossip—They say that Blanky was pecked to death by that wife of his.

UGLYMAN—I'd like to see any woman peck at me twice!

Gossip—She'd have to be mighty hungry if she did.

A CAÑON ECHO

STRANGE! in the rise and fall
Of a hundred voices singing,
Under and over all,
Through the violins outringing,
Over the flutes, and under
The organ's choral thunder—
Strange! to be hearing still
The sound of a little rill,
Up in the cañon's silence, far away,
Beneath the alders gray;
A little stream, half-locked with ice and snow,
Babbling and murmuring low
Through all the hours of one undying day,
Long ago.

Strange! in the dazzling light,
Perfume, color and glow,
Gleam of shoulders white,
Glitter of jewels bright,
In the boxes, row on row—
Strange! with the mimic glory
Of love in song and story
Before my eyes, to watch, so far away,
Beneath the alders gray,
That little, ice-fringed rill,
Skirting the pine-crowned ledges of the hill,
Murmuring with mocking laughter on its way
Across the snow,
All through the hours of one undying day,
Long ago.

MABEL EARLE.



THE HEIGHT OF DARING

WILLIE LITTLEBOY—What's a hero, anyhow?

BOB THICKNECK—A hero is a feller that dast to tie a tin can to a bull-dog's tail.



ALTHOUGH the sky looks down on the world, it gets blue itself, sometimes.

LOVE'S RETICENCE

THERE is no love more glorious than the sea's
 When heavenward to still crags his fervors fling
 White arms of worship, and the harmonies
 That mean all music from his bright lips ring.
 But my love, though it neither fails nor flags,
 My love is like the calmness of the crags.

There is no love more piteous than the quest
 That some lone-wandering moorwind may avow,
 O'er some blank moor wherefrom it yearns to wrest
 The tremulous woodcraft of a single bough.
 But my love, though it bides profound, secure,
 My love is like the muteness of the moor.

There is no love more passionately phrased
 Than when his wondrous voice, half song, half light
 (As though from each new note some new star blazed),
 The nightingale pours bounteous on the night.
 But my love, though its faith no tremor mars,
 My love is like the silence of the stars!

EDGAR FAWCETT.



APPENDICITIS, OF COURSE

CCHILD—Oh, mama, the poor hippopotamus is going to die! I gived it an
 apple, and it swallowed it, seeds and all!



SHE SPOKE OF FINANCES

BRIDE—It will be a tight squeeze.
 GROOM—It will.
 And he justified his words.



Teacher—A reptile is a creature that does not stand on feet, but crawls
 on the ground. Now, who'll give me an example of a reptile?
 Pupil—Baby brother.

THE ARTFUL ARABELLA

By Margaret Vinton Hamilton

THE bazaar at Longlake was the success of the out-of-town season. It threw all other semi-public functions into the shade. Money was needed by the Society for the Promotion of Domestic Ethics among the Filipinos, and New York and its purlieus responded by a suburban bazaar.

The great hall of the club-house was divided into bowers of greenery starred by electric lights, and every bower was in charge of half-a-dozen lovely beings whose names are ever present in the society articles of our newspapers.

The hotel accommodations of the club-house were taxed to the utmost, and every private residence had its quota of guests, so that Longlake for the week of the bazaar was more fashionable than the metropolis itself.

Of all the house-parties, however, none could compete with that of Mr. John Prouse Gullion, the bachelor billionaire, at his superb villa on the top of Roslyn Hill. There, he had gathered the four girls of his heart, and a woman he liked well enough to have married, had she not already been the wife of his absent and dear friend, Wiley Bird; for Gullion's nature was large, and his fancy easily tickled. Five unappropriated men made up the party, which would have been quite ideal except that Gullion's predominant eligibility threw the charms of mere personality into the shade.

Gullion merits an explanatory word even in the whirl of a bazaar, because the rapidity with which he had transmitted himself from obscurity to fame was Marconic in its magic.

From Kane City and copper mines, his electric spark had recorded itself in Wall street and society; from being considered a devilish-shrewd fellow, he had blossomed into a power in the money-market; from a matrimonial match into *The Catch par excellence*; from a modest deer into a "laughing lion"—and all in four years.

Behold him at the door of his omnibus-sleigh, helping his guests to alight at the club-house at nine o'clock on the last evening of the fair, and, perhaps, one might wonder from his chivalrous care for the comfort of others, his modesty of mien, and the sensitive cut of his nostrils, why self-distrust had never barred his way to glory.

Five feminine bundles of lace and fur were carefully disentangled from the sleigh-ropes and one another, and guided by Gullion to the shelter of the glass-enclosed piazza. His most conventional actions, when directed womanward, had the suggestion of a caress.

Of the ladies who were enjoying his hospitality, four were secretly wondering what mama would say if she knew how nearly her daughter had secured the great fortune—for how could Mr. Gullion fail to propose when he had said everything but the final, "Will you?" The fifth—Mrs. Wiley Bird, their chaperon—was a conspicuous example of the discreet young matron. Some people even hinted that Gullion never would marry until he could duplicate his friend Bird's wedded advantages. Indeed, it is not every day that such a combination of perfections is to be found, even in

the wife of some one else. Mrs. Bird told only half she knew; she was a good listener; she had executive ability; she had the charm that passes for beauty, and she wore her clothes with distinction. She gave Gullion good advice, and engaged his servants, and the heart of her husband safely trusted her during his frequent sporting trips, tropical or polar.

The people staying in the clubhouse were trooping out from the dining-room, evening gowns standing out gaily against the green background of the decorations in the hall. Gullion was enjoying the scene through a piazza window while he finished his cigar, and waited for a second sleigh that was bringing the rest of his guests. The sale was at its height. Now and then, a man could be singled out as an especially valuable quarry, from the fact that he was pursued by a bevy of women with note-books and pencils, soliciting subscriptions to raffles. One gay old boy of seventy-five, whose shrug and smile bore evidence of accumulated conquests, was in the act of taking shares in Mrs. Wiley Bird's Panhard motor, at two hundred dollars a share, as Gullion well knew, for that charming lady had confided to him at dinner that he should have a similar privilege later. A moment after, when Gullion's other friends arrived, little Ned Barber, beardless and twenty, was set upon by Miss Lily Bell, of local celebrity, and offered shares in a C-spring, high-hung perambulator which she was wheeling in and out among the crowd to the detriment of the women's laces and men's tempers. An elderly lady with an Elizabethan dress of purple brocade, and lace collar standing from her shoulders, was examining a set of Russian sables through her gold-and-turquoise lorgnette. Gullion guessed, even across the window-glass, that no fancy price could lure dollars from her pocket; when she bought, it was in the spirit of gain rather than as a mission to dissuade Filipino boys from plucking chickens alive, and killing them afterward.

Gullion threw away his cigar, and, passing through the coat-room, appeared at the side-door of the hall, where he stood adjusting his monocle like a Cyclops eye slightly out of plumb.

Mrs. Bird, with her note-book and pure smile, was close at hand.

"Only one chance left in the Panhard," she murmured, in her well-bred tones, "and it's my lucky number—seven. May I put your name down?"

"Don't you know you can do with me and my name just what you please?" he answered, gallantly.

"When did you ever fail Wiley or me!" exclaimed this discreet person.

Gullion's smile was rather tender.

"My greatest happiness in life is to be made use of by—" he hesitated, and added, rather lamely, "my friends."

Before he could note the effect of this speech, he was almost stunned by a gust of words in his other ear. Arabella Brash, the youngest member of the house-party, was in eloquent appeal.

"Oh, Prousie!" she exclaimed, "if you feel that way, do put yourself at my service, and take five chances *at least* in this diamond sun. Think of getting diamonds like these for two hundred and fifty dollars—" she counted rapidly on her fingers—"yes, that is five shares. Why, it's the opportunity of your life! Do you wish to see how they look on a really fine figure of a woman?" And Arabella spread back her arms, and stood displaying the magnificent lines of her well-developed person, with the glittering stones on the bosom of her gown.

Now, if Gullion could be said to have a weakness where all were preferred, it was for Arabella. She was so young, so healthy, so grandly alive, and withal so comely.

"Do you suggest my wearing the sun as an order on my coat, or hanging it by a ribbon from my neck?" he asked, taking her pencil.

Arabella guided the pencil to where

Gullion was to write his name, and then she looked maliciously into his eyes.

"How you make me regret your disabilities, Prousie, dear," she said. "If you were only old enough to be my godfather or something of that kind, the diamonds might never have to leave their present happy home," and an exquisite be-ringed hand fluttered over the site of the plastron.

A servant approached.

"The ladies of the flower-booth desire your company, sir, when you are at leisure," he said, delivering his message with trained precision; and Gullion, looking a trifle weary, prepared to obey.

Arabella found herself detained by her chaperon. Mrs. Bird's taste had been slightly shocked by the girl's reckless rattle, but she waited to reprove till their host had moved away.

"Are you not afraid to wear such valuable jewels in this crowd?" she began. "You know you would have to make good their loss."

"I am told we become each other, hugely," said Arabella, with a self-conscious smile, patting the diamonds, and glancing at the back of Gullion's head.

Mrs. Bird's tone became a bit sharper. "They make you very conspicuous," she said.

"Oh, what a pity!" said Arabella, with overdone simplicity. "I was just thinking what a good chance I had to get them permanently, with my one share and Prousie's five!"

"No really nice girl takes presents from gentlemen," said Mrs. Bird, severely, turning her back, while Arabella indulged in a smile that was almost a laugh.

In the meantime, Gullion was fighting his way across the hall as rapidly as momentary assaults upon his purse would allow. Perhaps, he was beginning to feel himself as worthy an object for the protection of the Domestic Ethics Society as were the Filipino chickens. Was not he, also, being plucked for his pin-feathers? Here, reflection was interrupted by a rear

assault from the perambulator, which caught him back of the knees, and tossed him sitting on its C-springs. Miss Lily Bell set up a shrill giggle, and her victim felt his pockets tighten with rage.

"Oh, Mr. Gullion!" she exclaimed, "I saw you taking chances in Arabella Brash's sun, and I'm horribly jealous! Now, I have a double C-spring perambulator——"

"And nothing to put in it!" said Gullion, infuriated.

Miss Lily's forty acid years came to her rescue; she could be coarse, too, upon occasion.

"Neither have you," she retorted, "unless it should be Arabella Brash's sun."

"Put me down for ten shares," said Gullion, with a groan.

"In Arabella's sun or my perambulator?" she persisted, and, thoroughly discomfited, Gullion dashed into the flower-booth, and was lost behind the counter.

This floral retreat held the three remaining ladies of his house-party. There was little Flossie Reed, with bronze hair and wide-open, blue eyes, who purred like a kitten when you said nice things to her, and never sat down without producing an impression of sleepy comfort; she was selling boutonnières at a dollar if you did your own pinning, and at two if she undertook to do it for you; then, there was Alida Singleton, almost too grand to attend to her business—and no wonder, for she united in her veins the blood of all the distinguished Colonial families, slightly impoverished; and, lastly, nice Mary Johnson, whose merriest made her side of the counter almost as popular as Flossie's.

It is not too much to assert that, in that very bower, the hero of this realistic sketch might have caught and caged the little god of love who was playing hide-and-seek among its roses; but, then, Gullion always found more excitement in the chase than the capture, and was slow to press his advantages. If the young rascal looked at him through Flossie's childish eyes, he

exclaimed, "How adorable!" only to add, with the next breath, "but so immature!" If he ambushed a cherub face and pair of wings behind Alida's family tree, he forbore to demand surrender because the branches seemed somewhat sapless. As to nice Mary Johnson, even Cupid himself let her alone, because, not being able to make a fool of her, he didn't enjoy the game—neither did Gullion, though Mary really was the wife for him, and he knew it.

So, throughout the evening, while there was a good deal of playing at cross-purposes, Gullion basked in the smiles of all his ladies, and, sometimes, felt almost Turkish in his matrimonial tendencies, and, sometimes, from the very fullness of his heart, was ready to swear celibacy.

At midnight, the fair was practically over. Gullion's horses had been stamping holes in the snow for more than an hour, and every one was ready to start except Arabella and Mrs. Bird, who seemed to find duties at every turn. Finally, Gullion determined to send the rest of his guests home in the omnibus, and himself wait for the two delinquents with the smaller sleigh.

He had just packed his party nicely when Arabella dashed out, followed by her maid with a basket.

"Tell them to make room for me, Prousie!" she said. "Can't my maid get inside? Oh, well, you'll have to sit up in front, Lucille, and Mr. Neddy Barber can ride on the step. You don't mind, do you, Neddy? Such news!" she continued, making no effort to get in; "such news as I have for Prousie, but I think I shall wait to tell it till we all get home."

Here, Alida's voice from inside the omnibus reached her in remonstrance.

"How can you keep Mr. Gullion standing in the cold without his coat and hat? Do be more considerate, Arabella!"

"Are we going without Mrs. Bird? What larks!" But, hearing Gullion's teeth chattering, she turned her attention to him. "Cold, Prousie? I'll soon warm you!" And, slipping her

arm through his, she raced him around the piazza at railway speed.

In the darkest corner, she had to confide her secret. "You have won the diamonds, you dear old boy!" she said, putting the case in his hand. "Now, take good care of them until there's a Mrs. Prousie to wear them." And, leaving him to digest her announcement, she scampered back and squeezed herself into the end seat of the sleigh. Neddy Barber, cold and cross, stood on the back step, inwardly cursing.

"Only four days to Christmas," Arabella began—she hated a silence; "I wonder whether Prousie means to make Christmas presents. I've made him two, a first edition of 'The Newcomes,' and a book of my own on chicken-raising."

"You never wrote it, Arabella," said Flossie.

"No, but I discovered it, which is just as instructive to Prousie! Let me think what I should like him to give me. Of course, he hasn't known all of you so long, which makes a difference, but to an old friend like me he might give——"

"A wedding-ring is what you're all after," shouted Neddy, from the door, and a murmur of fury rumbled through the omnibus.

Arabella wasted no words. She simply braced her shoulders against Bob Price, who sat next to her, and, giving Neddy a sudden shove, she landed him on his back in the snowy road. The coachman, ignorant of having dropped a passenger, was tearing ahead at a fast trot.

"Let him walk home, pert little brat that he is!" she exclaimed, scornfully; and the sentiment of the omnibus, male and female, was with her.

Her spirit must have been considerably ruffled, for, even as they turned in at the gate, she was heard to mutter the mystic word, "Saucebox!"

Late as the hour was, Gullion's front door stood hospitably open, and half-a-dozen servants swarmed to the omnibus to assist the guests to alight, and to relieve them of rugs and packages.

The depression caused by Ned's gauche remark had worn off, and the clatter and noise of the party's arrival would have waked the seven sleepers of Ephe-sus. The guests chased one another around the orange-trees in the marble vestibule; they joined hands, and charged into the heavy velvet hangings that separated it from the rotunda; and, finally, when the butler's subdued English voice was able to intimate above the din that they would find sandwiches and champagne in the library, they gave three cheers for Gullion, and betook themselves pell-mell to the feast. Some one suggested dancing, and, upon consultation with the butler, a blushing young footman was produced who admitted his skill with the pianola.

"What is the use of being unchaperoned if you do not celebrate the occasion?" they all asked; so, after the second waltz, Flossie was persuaded to do them a skirt dance to "Pop Goes the Weasel!"

Across the gaiety of these strains came the ominous clang of the front-door bell, and, with shrill shrieks of "Neddy Barber!" each girl seized a sandwich, and ran to her room, leaving the defenseless men to face the infuriated pedestrian.

The bedrooms opened on the gallery of the rotunda, so that a view of the hall below and of the great staircase was easily commanded. Peeping out of their doors, the girls saw Neddy being carried by his companions in the direction of the smoking-room.

"Do you suppose he is hurt?" asked Arabella, anxiously, as each door slowly opened when danger was past.

"Certainly not," they all assured her.

"He has turned sulky, and Bob Price is disciplining him," said Mary Johnson.

"I hope they'll toss him in a blanket," said Flossie, vindictively.

The question was raised as to whether politeness required them to wait up for Mrs. Bird, and they decided that a dressing-gown party in Alida's room would be the only thing that could keep them awake. The

room was directly over the vestibule, so they could not fail to hear her when she arrived.

For half an hour, they kept their watch around Alida's dying fire, and no sound broke the stillness of the night. Alida, whom fatigue had made dismal, told them gruesome tales, notably of an awful highway robbery that had taken place near Longlake only the previous year, and they had visions of Mrs. Bird and Gullion attacked and beaten and left half-dead by the roadside for the sake of the diamonds, and they all said, "Ugh!" and shuddered.

At last came the tinkle of sleigh-bells, and then Gullion's deep voice and Mrs. Bird's fainter treble, and the girls called themselves ninnies to have been frightened, and voted for bed without delay.

"I shall mark my disapprobation of her conduct by not waiting to bid her good night," said Flossie, virtuously; "driving about the country alone with Mr. Gullion at this hour!"

"I suppose they stayed for supper at the club," sniffed Alida, "and I must confess Mrs. Bird's duties as a chaperon can hardly be said to *gêner* her."

"Oh, let her enjoy her little St. Martin's Summer while she may," said Arabella, magnanimously. "Her time is short."

Mrs. Bird, be it understood, was barely thirty, but at nineteen all the world seems old.

The girls separated, and Arabella's pink-velvet trailers swished around the parquet of the gallery to the room nearest the staircase, and her little, high-heeled mules tick-tacked her sleepy footsteps. But, when she reached her bed, she could not sleep; the impression of Neddy carried by the other men came back with painful vividness, and, as she recalled the incident, she seemed to remember that his face was very pale. Suppose she had really injured him—suppose he had struck the back of his head, and fractured his skull—she had heard that people are able to get up and walk for miles with fractured skulls, and then, suddenly,

they collapse—she might have killed him! The thought was maddening. Bounding out of bed, she again put on the pink-velvet dressing-gown, and, opening her door, she stepped boldly out into the gallery. Mrs. Bird's door was open; then, she had not come upstairs. Perhaps, she and Prousie were working over Neddy's unconscious body. Arabella determined to venture into the bachelors' quarters. If Neddy were seriously ill, she would find the household aroused to attend him; if all were quiet, who would know of her indiscretion?

So, on she stalked to the south wing, slowly making the whole length of the silent corridor, and stopping to listen at each room. At last, on a door handle at the very end, under a dim electric light, she saw a placard hung by a masculine garter, and the following legend written in deplorably unformed characters:

"Tell my man not to call me tomorrow morning. Mr. Barber wishes to sleep."

Arabella sat down on the floor, and laughed till she cried, whether at Neddy's choice English, or at the sudden relief from fear, she could not have told, and then she got up and glanced at herself in the mirror opposite Neddy's door. She straightened the bow that tied her curls on the top of her head, and pulled out the laces and ribbons of her gown. After all, if one is caught straying, it is well to enlist sympathy by looking one's best.

Retracing her steps, she had almost reached the gallery when the soft hum of voices floated up from the foot of the stairs. She crept a step forward, and then halted—the scene below almost took her breath!

Mrs. Bird was leaning against one of the bronze columns that supported the lights for the staircase, and Prousie stood before her, holding both her hands. Her gorgeous evening coat was thrown back from her bare shoulders, showing the lace of her bodice, and her head, with its wreath of dark hair, was half-turned away, defining the graceful curve of her throat and chin.

"Why shouldn't you take it, or anything else from me?" Gullion was saying. "I'll engage to make Wiley see it in the proper light. He's too large-minded to be vexed at a little thing like that."

"Perhaps, I care even more for what you would think of me," said Mrs. Bird, lowering her eyelids.

"What I think of you? Well, if you want to know, I think you the sweetest"—here a kiss was bestowed on the right hand—"and most fascinating"—here the other hand had its innings—"and altogether charming woman that ever was made, and—great Scott! Barbara, what's the use in mincing matters between you and me! You will take the diamonds because you know it makes me happy to give them to you." And, without more ado, he pinned the jewels on the front of her gown.

"Thank you, dear friend," said Mrs. Bird, releasing her hands, only to lay them on Gullion's shoulders. "I think, perhaps, you are right. Such a friendship as ours is happily beyond the vulgarity of mere conventions." And, bending forward, she imprinted the ghost of a kiss on his forehead.

There were evidences of a disposition, on Gullion's part, to flout convention with greater zeal than Mrs. Bird approved, for she released herself from his encircling arm, and began the ascent of the stairs.

Arabella, behind a sheltering pillar, had really been an unwilling witness of the scene. She preserved silence, because she could not inflict the mortification upon Mrs. Bird of knowing herself discovered in a compromising situation; but, in regard to Prousie, her feelings were quite different. A man is fairer game, and Arabella felt a spirit of devilry surging through her veins.

As Mrs. Bird's door was shut and bolted, with some ostentation, Arabella appeared at the top of the stairs, a charming embodiment of youth and freshness.

Gullion rubbed his eyes, and said, "Damn!"

Arabella descended, flapping her

slippers, and showing the rosy heels of her dear little feet.

Gullion assumed a jaunty, defiant air, and asked how little girls happened to be up so late; but Arabella took no notice till she, too, stood under the column, and then she shook her finger at him, and said:

"Oh, shame, Prousie, to give away Mrs. Prousie's diamonds!"

"What d'ye mean?" blustered Prousie. "Diamonds! Who gave away diamonds?"

But Arabella's eyes were fixed wickedly on his, and a tormenting smile twitched her lips, as she said:

"Unfortunately, I know what I am talking about; I may even assert that you yourself gave *ocular* proof."

Gullion had to laugh. "That word is spelt with a 'c,' Arabella."

"I don't know how *you* like to spell it," she said, "but *I* thought it poor of its kind."

Gullion flushed a dull mahogany color, though he tried to assume some dignity. "Let us consider the incident closed, Arabella. I am sure you are too nice a girl to wish to misrepresent another woman."

"A really nice girl," she replied, "is a girl who never takes presents from gentlemen. I had Mrs. Bird's word for it no later than this very evening. I must congratulate her upon marriage being an emancipation from the rule."

"For God's sake, don't let her know that you know," he gasped.

"How nervous you seem, Prousie," she said, innocently. "What harm is there in mentioning such a simple fact? You gave your dear friend's wife a little Christmas present—upon my word, I don't believe it is much larger than a tea-cup—and you knew he wouldn't mind, for you said so when you gave it, while she, after becoming hesitation, took it only to gratify you, and thanked you with a salute, chaste as Diana's."

"Arabella," he interrupted, "I insist that this thing go no further." And, while the words were firm, the tone was beseeching.

"What is it you want of me?" she asked, coming close to him, and look-

ing into his face with a dimpling smile.

"Only to hold your tongue," he said, "if you *could* so far oblige me."

"I can't imagine what makes you so keen about my not mentioning what I saw—it can't be that you are really inlo— But, of course not! I'll tell you what I *will* promise. I give you my word of honor that I will tell only mama. You know every well-brought-up girl has no secrets from her mother till after she is engaged or married."

A violent sneeze drove her face into her handkerchief.

Gullion looked at her, sharply. She was certainly very handsome, if she were mischievous.

"Arabella, will you marry me?" he asked, desperately.

"This is indeed unexpected, Prousie," she said, with fine surprise. "Now, who would have guessed you were so fond of me!"

In a rather wide experience, Gullion had never seen any woman quite as alluring as Arabella in her dishabille of lace and velvet, with the tendrils of dark hair curling on her neck. He allowed himself another look.

"Well?" he questioned, this time with a little more heart, "I asked you whether you would marry me?"

"Ah!" she said, "I see you're still afraid I may whisper to the rushes that Midas has ass's ears; and so he has—dear old Midas, who isn't in it with all these designing women." And she gave his ears a gentle pull.

Gullion's complexion again responded, only, this time, it was not a flush of annoyance. Perhaps, he did not find it disagreeable to have his ears pulled by a beautiful woman at two o'clock in the morning. Bottom didn't when he was posing as Titania's "Gentle Joy."

"Is it as a sharer of your secrets you want me, or am I simply irresistible?" she asked, looking at him, coyly.

"You are a monstrous fine woman!" he said, holding out his hands.

Arabella moved a step away, and a demure expression settled on her lips.

"I am afraid Mrs. Bird would hardly

approve of my being up so late," she said; "you might ask me again in the morning."

At that moment came the sound of an opening door, and Mrs. Bird, pale and looking a trifle worn, stood leaning on the balustrade of the gallery.

"Arabella!" she cried; "what does this mean?"

"You are shocked, aren't you?" said Arabella, with a deprecating gesture, "but I thought I heard robbers after Prousie's diamonds, and I came down to protect him. I am just going to bed,

now that he has assured me they are safe."

"It is an extraordinary hour for a young woman to be talking to a man, and in such a costume—" But here Arabella's gentle voice interrupted her.

"It isn't as wrong as it seems, dear Mrs. Bird, for Prousie has just asked me to marry him, haven't you, Prousie?"

There was a pause, and then Gullion, with magnificent courage, answered:

"I have."



A SUMMER MAID

I KNOW her eyes are
As Summer skies are;
Her low replies are
As rills that run
Toward Eldorado,
Through glow and shadow,
When days grow glad, O
With vernal sun!

I know her lips are
As sweet-briar tips are;
Her laughter's slips are
Like thrushes' trills,
That break in gushes
Athwart the hushes,
When twilight blushes
Behind the hills.

I know her hair is
Like gold the fairies
Find hidden where is
Nor glint nor gleam;
Her lovely presence,
Like some fair pleasance,
Hath the evanescence,
Yet truth, of dream.

I know her love is
As some white dove is;
The thought thereof is
As wondrous wine;
From this dark fate-way
I should pass straightway
Joy's jasper gateway
Were it but mine!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

A MAN, A HORSE AND A GIRL

By Molly Elliot Seawell

THE mellow afternoon sun of September shone upon the wild, flat Texas landscape, with only two objects visible in the whole wide range of vision. Both of these were horsemen—that is, if the lean, shambling creature on four bad legs, which ambled in advance, could be called a horse, except by courtesy. His rider was as lean as the steed, and cadaverous as well. His sleek, scanty, black hair was plastered down over his ears, and from under his broad sombrero peeped a pair of villainous black eyes. The expression in those eyes was an indictment in itself, and would have gone a long way toward convicting him before one of those Texas juries, which judge a man on the equity side rather than on the law side. Behind him, and fast overtaking him, were another man and horse, which possessed all the spirit, comeliness and grace that the first man and horse lacked. The horse, a powerful chestnut, showed by his dusty coat that he had traveled far that day, but he was getting over the ground at a gait which proved that he could do any job of work ever cut out for a horse in Texas. His rider was well built, without superfluous flesh, but not to be called lean. He was a graceful rather than a handsome man, and as the crux of the other man's ugliness lay in his expression, so the crux of Jack Ledyard's good looks, such as they were, lay in the frank, laughing light that radiated from his eyes. The women he liked called him handsome. The women he did not like called him ugly. He had, however, that mascu-

line comeliness which very few brave and honest men escape—and without which Adonis is as nothing.

Ledyard loved his kind, and had the purpose in his mind, as soon as his eye fell upon the scarecrow in front of him, to overtake the scarecrow—and this presently came to pass.

"Evenin'," said Ledyard, bringing his horse down to a walk, which kept up very well with the slow, hard, high trot that seemed the best the scarecrow's horse could do.

"Evenin'," affably responded the scarecrow.

"Air yer countin' on bein' in Centre-ville to-night, mister?" asked Ledyard.

"If this here horse don't drop by the wayside," responded the scarecrow.

Ledyard, thus invited to consider the horse's demerits, glanced at him with a critical eye.

"About the wust you ever see, ain't he?" asked the scarecrow, with a faint grin.

"Oh, no!" promptly answered Ledyard. "I've seen 'em when they had to be carted to the bone-yard to be shot. Your horse can get along by himself, and carry you, too—though you're a mighty-light weight."

"Fever," said the scarecrow, sentimentously; "breakbone fever—thirty-four days. Doctors said I couldn't live. If I lived, I couldn't walk. If I could walk, I couldn't ride. Wouldn't have no memory, no sense, no nothin'. Well, sir, here I am; and excep'n' a kind o' misery and weakness in my spine and stomach, I'm as good as ever I was—which ain't much."

"Doctors are the biggest—" Ledyard was going to say liars, but changed it to another word less strenuous. "Doctors are the biggest frauds walkin' around on two legs under the canopy. Never had no call for 'em, and ain't got no use for 'em"—the latter part of which speech accounted for the first part.

"I ain't sayin', though," continued Ledyard, doing a hasty act of justice, "that the doctors ain't good enough fellers as fellers. I never see one yet as run away from an epidemic, or didn't go to a woman or a child, and often when there wasn't a speck of a chance of gettin' a fee." And then, warming with the generosity of speaking well for men whom he despised professionally with all the energy of a perfectly well man, he added, enthusiastically: "And I've seen as stiff a game of poker put up by some of them doctors down at El Paso and Albuquerque and thereabouts as you'd wish to see, sir—standin' to their game like men, and as cool as January when they was losin' the very shirts off their backs." And then, suddenly switching off from the subject of doctors and their few redeeming traits, he said: "If I had my way, I'd never let any but a single man play poker. It don't make any matter when a feller goes broke that hasn't nobody but himself; but, if he's got a wife and kids—oh, Lord! sir, I never see a woman yet of the right sort that didn't hate poker like the devil. They smile kind of sickly when it's mentioned, and they don't like to be joked about spendin' the winnin's their husbands gives 'em."

"Maybe," said the scarecrow, softly, as he bumped up and down in his saddle, "maybe, you're thinkin' of gettin' married yourself. When a man's got the marryin' bee in his bonnet, it makes him mighty moral and partickler—for a while."

Ledyard blushed—that is to say, his tanned skin turned a little darker, and he cast down his eyes like a school-girl, and simpered for a minute; then, he burst into a string of

objurgations on his admirable horse, that were calculated to make one's blood run cold.

The scarecrow laughed silently, and, when Ledyard's expletives had been exhausted, replied: "If you think that of your horse, what would you say to this here animile as I'm acrost of? I swear, I believe it'll kill me to ride him another day. He's got the infernalesst trot, and the damndest walk on him—its worse'n the breakbone fever to ride him. If I could trade him off in Centreville— Ever been to Centreville?"

Ledyard shook his head, and blushed his tawny blush again. "Two or three times—don't know but one man in it."

They jogged along in silence for a time after this. The scarecrow, his eyes fixed on the sandy road before him, seemed lost in thought. So was Ledyard. His mind was full of thoughts of a person who lived in Centreville—not the one man he knew in that village, but the daughter of that man—and this man had promised to shoot him on sight, and might possibly keep his word.

The trouble began over a game of poker, and reached its climax over a case of horse-stealing. It had been decided in that community, several months before, that anybody found with a horse in his possession, of which he could give no satisfactory account, should be hanged when caught. Up to that time, a trial of the accused had taken place before a hastily improvised tribunal; but, when two horses belonging to a member of the legislature had been taken in broad daylight—and when Jack Ledyard, who was gifted with native eloquence, had persuaded the orderly crowd of the best citizens, who had assembled to dispose of the two suspects, to let them be bound over to appear before the grand jury, and when the accused had crawled through the jail window, had got the horses out of the jailer's stable, and were off four hours before they were missed, it was generally agreed that it was time to abolish law in favor of justice.

The jailer, Captain Pedro Velasco, who had been outwitted by his prisoners, had earned the condemnation of the whole community—so prone is human nature to fall foul of the instrument, instead of the cause, of misfortune, which, in this case, was the tumbled-down condition of the jail. Captain Velasco, otherwise known as Cap'in Pete, in arguing the matter over ethically in his mind, concluded that it all came from that good-looking, smooth-tongued Jack Ledyard, who should have been a lawyer instead of a cattle man, and who, although a pure product of Texas soil, advocated the revolutionary doctrine that horse-thieves should be tried before regular tribunals.

In brooding over this matter of Ledyard's moral aberration, Cap'in Pete had concluded that Ledyard was his enemy, and should be shot on sight—and had conveyed so much to him by letter. Yet, in the face of this was Ledyard journeying toward Centreville, in the gold and purple September afternoon. He was not going to Centreville primarily to serve as a target for Cap'in Pete, but Cap'in Pete had a daughter, Seraphine. It was a high-flown name, but Ledyard thought it fitted Seraphine Velasco exactly. And the very hour in which Ledyard had won the triumph over the crowd, and had got the two horse-thieves put in the rickety jail, instead of ornamenting the branches of a big cotton-wood tree just outside the town, he had earned the hate of the father and the love of the daughter.

Seraphine had a little Spanish blood in her, enough to account for her name, and to give her the dark eyes, the grace, the coquetry, of a Spanish girl. But, all unknown to herself, she was an American girl in the essential of knowing what she wanted in the way of a lover or a husband, and getting it. In other ways, she was like all the rest of the women in the world—wise, simple, sly, frank, cruel and devoted.

Ledyard had met her at some of the dances which both of them had ridden

twenty miles to attend, and had danced with her a dozen times. That was all. But, for her, he was willing to take the chances of being shot on sight by Cap'in Pete. Seraphine, being much wiser than her lover, had more than that to go upon, when she fell in love with Jack Ledyard. She knew he was reckoned an honest fellow—which is a positive and comprehensive phrase. She had praised his dancing excessively, and did not care a fig about it. She had not said a word about his rich, persuasive voice, and his racy talk, which enchanted her; but such is the way of a woman.

The court-house green had been filled with an assemblage of the best citizens, all carrying guns of some sort, and several carrying ropes, and when Ledyard, sitting on his horse, had earnestly harangued the best citizens, Seraphine had heard every word from her window in the jailer's house. And, as women are as prone to fall in love through their ears as men are through their eyes, so Seraphine Velasco fell in love with Jack Ledyard, and determined to make him hers. He had, in her sight and hearing, performed the impossible; he had made a collection of leading citizens of rural Texas, down by the Mexican border, put a couple of horse-thieves in jail instead of on the limb of a tree.

Shortly afterward, Seraphine had managed to convey to Jack Ledyard that she would like to see him in Centreville. And, meanwhile, quite unknown to Seraphine, had come that other message from Cap'in Pete, that he was prepared to shoot Ledyard on sight. It had not kept Ledyard from coming to Centreville when Seraphine sent for him. He was not unmindful of a certain risk, but he recalled that men did not always shoot when they said they would. At all events, he was of the sort of man who does not stay away from a place because some one has threatened him if he comes to it; and so he had shaved himself, put on his handsomest sombrero, his big Mexican spurs of silver, and set out to see the lady of his love.

As the distance shortened between him and Seraphine, Ledyard grew thoughtful and replied in monosyllables to the droning talk of the scarecrow. At last, when they were but five miles away from the little town, something the scarecrow said waked Ledyard up. It was this—in a tired, complaining voice:

"It's this durned horse that makes me feel so bad. If I had a rest of a mile or two on a good horse—like yourn——"

Ledyard came out of his day-dream, and, in the fast-falling twilight, gazed at his companion. The man looked miserably ill, and bent forward on his horse as if every jolt gave him a twinge. Ledyard was soft at heart, and was smitten by the fellow's wretchedness.

"Here," he said, swinging himself off his chestnut, "ride my horse until we get in sight of the town, and I'll ride this bone-yard of yours."

The scarecrow displayed a surprising agility in dismounting, and, in a moment, was on the chestnut. Ledyard was stooping to readjust the stirrup on the scarecrow's nag, when, suddenly, the chestnut, with his new rider, gave a bound from the spur, and the next moment was flying down the road under both whip and spur. Ledyard grew pale with rage. He reached backward for his pistol, but withdrew his hand—he was as likely to hit the horse as the rider. And it was clearly impossible that the horse-thief should escape in that locality, with such a horse as the chestnut. In this, Ledyard did not allow for that percentage of apparent impossibilities, which turn into the easiest possibilities imaginable.

He sprang into the saddle, and dug his spurs into the wretched beast he bestrode, but all that was to be had out of him was the high, slow, awkward trot, which the scarecrow had truly called infernal. Ledyard trotted along, fuming and plotting revenge, and his opinions on the subject of horse-stealing underwent a radical and immediate change.

The soft September dusk had fallen before he came within sight of the lights of the little village, straggling out upon the cactus-plains. Ledyard was cruelly mortified at having to enter Centreville on his present mount, and debated within himself which ignominy he should choose—walking, or riding the scarecrow's horse. But this was solved for him by suddenly finding the road full of men, who seemed to have appeared as if by magic out of the purple twilight. And then a figure, which Ledyard at once recognized as Cap'in Pete, thrust the cold muzzle of a pistol into his face, while subtly his own pistol was whisked out of his hip-pocket, and he was told to dismount. Ledyard did so, without a word. There was still some light, and by it the crowd carefully examined the scarecrow's horse.

"It's him!" promptly said Cap'in Pete, after a rapid, but thorough, look at the horse; "four white feet, blaze face, nick out of his left ear."

"Yes, it's him!" murmured the crowd, and Ledyard felt himself turned around, and marched along the road toward the big cotton-wood tree on the other side of the village.

A person, knowing the temper and feelings of a crowd under the like circumstances, might well feel nervous. Ledyard certainly felt extremely nervous, but he did not lose his head or his coolness.

"Gentlemen," said he, politely addressing the crowd, "will any of you oblige me by tellin' me what is this all about?"

"Horse-stealin'," replied Cap'in Pete, who walked next Ledyard.

"And did a feller lookin' like he had been buried and dug up again, and ridin' a chestnut horse that any fool could see didn't belong to him, bring you this news about me?"

There was a pause, a catching of the breath, but the steady march to the cotton-wood tree did not halt. Cap'in Pete, however, replied:

"Yes, that was the sort of a feller."

"Then," said Ledyard, "he was the

man who stole *my* horse, which I lent him to ride, to ease him a while."

At this, there was a slowing up in the gait of the crowd. They were now entering the one long street that made up the village of Centreville. Ledyard walked along, quite unconcernedly. He saw that appearances were in his favor, and that he had but to let the heaven work. It worked so well that, when the court-house green was reached, there was a halt, and several citizens desired Ledyard to say what he had to say for himself.

Ledyard looked all around him. On one side was the court-house, on the other the jail, with a string of houses between. In some of them, the windows had been violently closed. In others, they were wide open. In front of the jailer's house, a girl was sitting on a pony, and so was an involuntary spectator of what was going on. Ledyard saw her, and a smile came over his face that showed all of his white teeth. It was Seraphine Velasco.

The scene was exactly as it had been a month before, on that unfortunate occasion when Ledyard's natural gift of eloquence had caused Justice to be robbed of her dues. All remembered this, and, with that relish for a good speech which marks a primitive but intelligent people, the crowd waited to hear Ledyard's plea for himself.

One man called out: "You got them other two fellers off so slick, you ought to git the town to give you a new hoss, saddle and bridle, besides sendin' you to the legislature."

Ledyard deigned no reply to this sarcasm, but, walking to the middle of a ring formed around him, began, impressively:

"Fellow citizens."

The cool assurance of a suspected horse-thief calling some of the leading citizens of Texas, "fellow citizens," struck the crowd with deep admiration. So it did Seraphine Velasco, sitting on her pony not fifty yards away, and listening intently.

There was a pause in expectation of the flood of eloquence that might be

expected to burst forth. Every eye was fixed on Ledyard's lithe figure, standing gracefully at ease, his debonaire smile, his air of good-humored tolerance of what might be designated as tomfoolery of the most advanced description. Every ear was strained to catch his words. When they came, uttered in a slow, sweet voice, they were few and simple; but not Demosthenes and Cicero rolled in one could have produced a greater or more instantaneous effect. This was what Ledyard said:

"D'ye think I would have stole *that* horse?"

The breathless silence lasted a moment more, while the crowd was taking in the exquisite common-sense of Ledyard's plea. Then, a yell broke forth. Through it all, Ledyard was conscious only of the slim figure of Seraphine Velasco, sitting on the pony fifty yards away. The laughing and yelling having ceased, the crowd resumed a sober consideration of the case.

Let it not be supposed that Ledyard's argument, convincing as it was to a large portion of the citizens present, was convincing to all. The idea of turning a man loose who had in his possession any kind of a horse that he was accused of stealing, was foreign to the popular conscience in that part of Texas. The most Ledyard could hope for was to be remanded to jail, and to be tried by the court which was to sit within two days. But even this hope was jeopardized, when Cap'in Pete bawled at the top of his lungs, and into Ledyard's ear:

"Did you *buy* the horse, then?"

The crowd wavered a little at that, and waited for Ledyard's reply.

"No, you infernal fool!" he replied, to the father of his adored one, and then proceeded to explain to the community at large how he came by the horse.

Here was his chance for a speech. His description of the way he had been fooled by the scarecrow was full of humor, and, by the time he got through, nothing but the ethics of the

region, which assumed a man in such cases to be guilty until he was proved to be innocent, prevented his being let go. To be put in the county jail was equivalent to an acquittal in the popular mind; and, by a common impulse, the crowd, with Ledyard and Cap'in Pete in the middle, marched to the low adobe building, which answered for a jail, and Ledyard was duly incarcerated. There was a general understanding that the case was to be tried on its merits before the county court, two days thereafter.

The crowd melted away more quickly than it had gathered, and Ledyard, in the silence of the September night, found himself in a cell, lighted by the jailer's lantern, in the hands of the jailer, Cap'in Pete.

"Man," said Cap'in Pete, "come here."

He went, Ledyard following, to the one little window, and rattled the rickety bars. Then, he shook the heavy, but worm-eaten, door with its rusty lock and hinges.

"This jail ain't worth a damn for keepin' prisoners," remarked Cap'in Pete, sententiously. "But no prisoner won't ever get out of this jail again while I'm the jailer. A jailer with good eyesight, who don't sleep much, and is handy with his pistol, is worth a durn sight more'n any kind of a jail. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly," replied Ledyard. "But air you as good at keepin' a mob out of this jail as keepin' a prisoner in it?"

Cap'in Pete's sharp, black eyes were clouded with doubt, and he made no reply.

"Anyways," continued Ledyard, "s'pose we make this agreement. You're to stand off a lynchin' party, provided I stand off a rescuin' party, in case either appears."

"I'll agree to that," replied Cap'in Pete, who knew Ledyard to be a man of his word, and able to hit the bull's-eye nine times out of ten. Then, Cap'in Pete added, in a casual manner:

"By the way, have you forgot that I promised to shoot you on sight?"

"No, indeed," answered Ledyard, politely; "I wouldn't be likely to forget such an impressive remark as that, comin' from as good a shot as you."

"Then, what in hell did you come here for?"

"To see your daughter," replied Ledyard, taking off his hat with a sweep.

Cap'in Pete's jaw dropped. He stood, the lantern in one hand, his pistol in the other, staring into Ledyard's smiling face. Ledyard, quite unconsciously, assumed a blushing, school-girlish air, as he had done when twitted on the subject of his matrimonial plans by his companion of the afternoon. And, while apparently he was lost in bashfulness, and Cap'in Pete truly was lost in amazement, Ledyard suddenly twisted the lantern out of Cap'in Pete's hand, and set it on the dirt floor.

"I could have took your pistol just as easy," remarked Ledyard, when Cap'in Pete picked up the lantern.

"Not quite," said Cap'in Pete; "but you'll allow for a man's surprise, when a suspected horse-thief tells him he's after his daughter. It ain't never happened before."

"That's true; and suppose, cap'in, we agree to put off settlin' our little fuss, until I settle with the blasted fools who got me here." And Ledyard proceeded to characterize the community and outlying suburbs of Centreville in a manner which would not bear transcribing in the pages of a reputable journal. Cap'in Pete listened and looked, with a secret admiration of his prisoner. He readily agreed to postpone the settlement of their little "fuss," and even took Ledyard's parole, and went across the street to his own house to supper. Within half an hour, Cap'in Pete returned with a negro behind him, bearing a tray, on which was a good supper.

But the thing which made Ledyard's eyes light up was when he felt, under the white cloth, a small object. He took it out; it was a little bunch of

white jessamine, fastened with a strand of long, black hair—Seraphine's hair.

When Cap'in Pete looked again, he saw, by the dim light of the lantern in the cell, the little bunch of jessamine—the most spiritual flower in the world—fastened upon Ledyard's flannel shirt, directly over his heart. Cap'in Pete gasped once or twice—Seraphine—a horse-thief—a bunch of jessamine—shooting at sight! Cap'in Pete's mind was slow, and all these things struggled chaotically within him, almost making his head swim. He watched Ledyard closely, but never was there a quieter prisoner. He smoked until nine o'clock, and then, rolling himself in his blanket, and lying down on the floor, slept the sleep of peace. Cap'in Pete sat before the door of the cell, with his eyes fixed on the sleeping man, and his thoughts busy with the same object.

The hours crept slowly on, and a little, half-grown, pallid moon declined. It was quite dark, and a cool wind had sprung up from the cactus plain, and swept softly over the sleeping town. The faint, musical rustling of the leaves of the mulberry and cotton-wood trees scarcely broke the stillness of the night. But, suddenly, the tramp of many horses' hoofs resounded from afar, and, all at once, Cap'in Pete discovered a line of horsemen upon the sandy road leading into the town.

He stepped inside the cell, and, laying a hand on Ledyard's shoulder, said: "Wake up! They're comin' for you!"

Ledyard had waked, clear of eye and of brain, with the first touch of the jailer's hand.

"Is it a lynchin' party or a rescuin' party?" he asked, sitting up on the ground.

"Damfino!" replied Cap'in Pete. "But neither one is a-goin' to get you, if I can help it."

"One man with a gun ain't much," remarked Ledyard, getting leisurely to his feet. Then, as if struck by a bright thought, he said:

"Look here, cap'in, I don't want 'em to get me any more'n you do. Suppose

we play this game together. You give me a gun, and I'll help stand 'em off, lynchin' or rescuin'."

"Your word?"

"My word, sir."

Cap'in Pete produced another pistol from somewhere about his person.

"I should say," said Ledyard, taking upon himself the plan of campaign, "that I'd better take the window. If I took the door, they'd shoot me down in a couple of winks—if they're lynch-ers. They won't do you any harm."

"That's true," replied Cap'in Pete, with the rhythmic sound of hoof-beats growing louder and nearer. At that moment, he felt a hand on his arm, and, turning, there was Seraphine—black-eyed, red-lipped, slim Seraphine. She was fully dressed, and had evidently not been to bed.

"I heard 'em," she said, "and I came over to help you."

She spoke to her father, but looked at Ledyard, who made her a low bow.

"Excuse me," he said, "but it seems to me this ain't the place for a young lady."

"I don't agree with you, Mr. Ledyard," she said. "I am here—to—to help my father."

"You can stay," said Cap'in Pete. "I won't let you do any firin', but you can be loadin' while I'm firin'—if necessary."

By that time, the horsemen were galloping up the village street, and pouring into the open green space on which the jail and court-house fronted. Windows banged up and down, doors were noisily opened and shut, and, suddenly, the whole town was alight.

Three of the men, evidently the leaders, dismounted and walked up to the jail door, where stood Cap'in Pete, with Seraphine behind him. Several pistols lay on a wooden bench inside the door—Cap'in Pete was rich in pistols—and Seraphine was examining their loading with a careful hand and a practised eye.

The spokesman of the leaders then said, pleasantly:

"Good evenin', Cap'in Pete. We've

come—come after the prisoner, cap'in."

"You can't get him," responded Cap'in Pete.

He did not add that, if any effort were made that way, somebody would get hurt. But Cap'in Pete was known as a man dangerous to trifle with, and the angle at which he held his pistol was eloquent in itself. A slight pause followed. Seraphine had got through with her examination, and leaned back against the jamb of the door. She was a picture of girlish grace and ease.

The leaders were, for a moment, disconcerted. One of them turned toward the window, and placed his hand on the rickety framework of bars, but the gleam of a pistol-barrel, poked immediately under his nose by Ledyard, caused the would-be intruder to withdraw.

A consultation was held, and the demonstration against the door was renewed. But there stood Cap'in Pete, like a second Gibraltar, and behind him, with a white arm around his neck, was Seraphine. The ethics of lynching in that part of the world required that no one should be hurt except the delinquent, and here was Cap'in Pete, not only exposing himself to be hurt, but his daughter, too—because, when the fusillade began, bullets were apt to fly wild.

It was determined to parley further with Cap'in Pete. The three leaders, putting their pistols in their pockets, advanced toward him.

"You stop there!" was Cap'in Pete's welcome to them, indicating a dead line, at which they stopped. From within the jail came Ledyard's voice, soft, yet penetrating:

"You're right, boys, to stop. I've often noticed as lynchers have just the same objection to bein' shot as the man they're after has to bein' hanged."

No reply was vouchsafed to this great truth, but the first spokesman proceeded to attack Cap'in Pete on the moral side.

"Cap'in," said he, insinuatingly, "you ain't the man to stand in the way of the law takin' its course?"

"You're right, sir," replied Cap'in Pete, and my prisoner is goin' to be tried before the county court, as sets at Centreville, Thursday, the eighteenth of September, which is day after to-morrow."

"I mean," said the orator, "the higher law—the law that says a horse-thief has got to be strung up, as soon as caught, to a cotton-wood tree."

"You go to the devil, Dave Hen-son!" was Cap'in Pete's reply.

"Come, now, cap'in," continued Dave, in a mildly expostulating tone; "you're takin' an unfair advantage of us havin' this young lady around."

"That's what I've been telling him, gentlemen," called out a voice—Ledyard's voice—from the interior of the jail.

"Seraphine," said Cap'in Pete, "do you keep close to your dad—and, if they kill me, keep on firin' as long as you can stand."

"I will, father," replied Seraphine.

The leaders withdrew a little way, and, after five minutes of consultation, a wild yell broke forth from the throats of the mob, a fusillade of pistol shots rang out into the clear, cool night, and a dash was made for the jail door. But the dash stopped at the dead line, covered by Cap'in Pete's pistol.

"This jail ain't no Jericho, boys," called out Cap'in Pete, "and you can't get in it by hollerin' and yellin' and firin' your pistols in the air."

The three leaders appeared crest-fallen at their failure, the more so when a voice from the crowd called out:

"We didn't know there was to be a woman in the business."

"But she is here, and she means to stay," cried Seraphine, advancing to the dead line. In the ghostly half-light they could see only the outline of her white gown, but they could easily imagine the flash of her black eyes. "And do you know why?" She waited as if for an answer, then made her own reply in a ringing voice: "Because here are the only two human beings whom I love, and who love me—my

father and Mr. Ledyard. He came to see me—do you hear? If you hang him, you will have to kill me first, and then go back and face your wives!”

As the girl began speaking, every eye was fixed upon her, and, when she finished, there was a pause, electric with feeling. Then, a cheer broke forth. The three leaders of the crowd did not join the cheering, but mounted their horses, and rode off with the rest. In three minutes, not a horseman was in sight.

Cap'in Pete clapped Seraphine on the shoulder, in warm appreciation. “I ought to make you my deputy, girl,” he cried; and, as he spoke, Seraphine, without a word, fell over in a dead faint.

It was only for a moment, but it was long enough for Ledyard to get to her, and kneel by her. When she came to, and staggered to her feet, she turned away from him, a deep blush succeeding her pallor.

“I only said it,” she said, with her face averted from both her lover and her father, “to save his life.”

“Then,” replied Ledyard, “if you didn't mean it, I wish you had let 'em hang me!”

Cap'in Pete looked from one to the other, and was the most disconcerted of the trio.

“Why,” he stammered, “how—what about our little fuss?”

“That'll keep,” replied Ledyard.

“And I sent you word I'd shoot you on sight?”

“Yes, sir, you did. But, when Miss Seraphine, as she mentioned just now, invited me to call to see her, why, cap'in, I did as you or any other man would have done—I come.”

And Ledyard retired within the jail, leaving Seraphine sitting on the doorstep, while Cap'in Pete took his old stand in the doorway. Outwardly, he was calm, but inwardly, he felt as if Judgment Day were at hand, and the universe were getting the preliminary shaking-up.

Seraphine sat motionless on the doorstep, looking into the night, and listening to the beating of her own heart.

In about ten minutes, Ledyard stepped to the door.

“Cap'in,” he said, “they're comin' back. I reckon you had better send the young lady home across the street.”

Even as he spoke, there was the sound of a crowd of horsemen approaching, not by the sandy road, but through the shallow ravine at the back of the little town. Five minutes brought a hundred of them to the jail. Cap'in Pete had resumed his attitude, with his pistol hand ready for business, and Seraphine, as cool as ever, stood behind him. Ledyard had his former place by the window.

This time, the crowd did not come to the front of the jail, but went straight to the window. Several of them dismounted, and, going to the window, one of them called out:

“Is that you, Jack? Here we are to get you out.”

“No, you ain't,” responded Ledyard. “You've come on a fool's errand, Cyrus Martin. I'm here to stay until next Thursday, when I'm to be tried before the county court—and acquitted.”

“G'long!” The speaker's voice expressed deep disgust. He continued: “Do you think they'll let you stay in this old hen-coop until Thursday? We heard they was comin' after you to-night, so that's why we come, too.”

“They've come and gone, Cyrus Martin; and, if you and the rest of the gang lay a finger on me, I'll pepper you, sure. I've got a gun.”

Ledyard thrust the pistol through the bars, and something in his voice made the party transfer their argument to the jail door.

“Come. now, Cap'in Pete,” said Cyrus Martin, in a blustering tone, “we don't want no foolishness—we jest want Jack Ledyard. He ain't no more a horse-thief than you are—but it ain't safe to keep him here, and we are come after him.”

“Mr. Ledyard,” called out Cap'in Pete, “do you wish to go with these gentlemen? For, of course, having given you a gun, you are your own man, so

to speak, when you are surrounded by your friends like this."

"No, cap'in, thank you," responded Ledyard; "I prefer to stay where I am. I'm a great one for law and order, and it hurts my feelin's to see my friends comin' on a Jayhawkin' expedition like this. Them other fellers that wanted to string me up weren't no friends of mine—now, I ain't tryin' to make a joke—and that's why I wouldn't have anything to say to 'em; but these here gentlemen air my friends—Cyrus Martin, you always was the biggest fool between the Mississippi and the Rio Grande."

Cyrus Martin, thus described, uttered a yell of defiance.

"Come on, boys," he cried, "let's tear the old shack down, anyhow. They've drugged Jack Ledyard, or he'd never talk this way."

Cyrus Martin made a rush at the jail window to wrench the rusty bars away, but a pistol shot cracked out. He stopped, wavered, and staggered back with a groan, clutching his right arm.

"Nobody's hurt!" called out Ledyard. "Look on the ground, and you'll find the bullet. But the next one will have a message for some of you."

Somebody stooped and picked the bullet from the ground, and there was a shout of laughter. A genuine laugh is fatal to many sorts of mischief. In this case, it was to Cyrus Martin's leadership. The crowd rode off faster than the other one had done.

"Seraphine," said Cap'in Pete, "you go home, and go to bed right away."

"Yes, father," replied Seraphine, and went out of the door.

As she passed the window, she heard

something that Cap'in Pete did not hear. It was Ledyard who whispered:

"Good night, love."

"Good night, love," Seraphine whispered back—then ran for her life.

The next morning, a deputation of leading citizens of Centreville waited on Ledyard at the jail, and formally offered him his release, but Ledyard declined.

"I'm a-goin' to be tried before the county court for horse-stealin'," he said. "I'm goin' to vindicate the law, and make Centreville the most celebrated spot in the state of Texas, and illuminate local history with a page that will be bright alongside that of San Jacinto and the Alamo. D'ye hear? Now, get out of this!"

A part of this promise was performed. On the following Thursday, Jack Ledyard stood a trial before a jury of his peers, and was triumphantly acquitted of horse-stealing. The old horse was, in himself, the most convincing testimony offered. The prosecuting attorney, abandoning the theory of theft, claimed, however, that any man having such a looking animal in his possession ought to be hanged on general principles.

As for the lanky, black-eyed gentleman, just out of breakbone fever, who had galloped off on Ledyard's horse, the earth seemed to have swallowed him and the horse, too. Nothing whatever could be found out about either man or beast, but the ultimate result of the transaction was, as Ledyard expressed himself, some time after:

"I lost the best horse in the state of Texas, but I got the sweetest wife in the world. Ain't that so, Seraphine?"



OR NIGHTMARES

THE poet referred to lobsters when he spoke of "such stuff as dreams are made of."

THE BADNESS OF BABE

By Ethel Sigsbee Small

BABE sat on the lowest step, and ground his toes in the gravel. Ennui was settling down upon him. He had been told to "pick flowers." The heads of four gaudy dandelions and two mild-eyed daisies lay beside him, meek sacrifices to his amusement. "Catch a grasshopper, Babe, dear," was the next suggestion. He had done his best to get the whirring fellow under his straw hat, but, when it was lifted, breathlessly, only a pink-faced clover laughed up at him. He put on the hat with the streamers in front, and this amused him for a time. It was fun to blow the streamers out, wait until they settled on his nose, then blow again. But no one would look to see what a funny boy he was. Even to the youngest of us, it is hard to act without an audience. He trotted up to his mother.

"Mother, this is such a *deadly* place!" he protested.

The adjective was Babe's mother's own, and she could not but laugh a little. The man at her side did not laugh, however; he frowned, and hit his boot hard with his cane. Babe's mother turned a face very like Babe's to her son.

"Oh, Babe!" she sighed, pouting, "why are you so naughty to-day? I am learning to dread Watson's afternoon out," she added, turning to the man.

"I be's good with Watson," said Babe, defiantly, "and Watson be's good to me. Watson makes me boats, and helps me dig to China. We likes to dig—me and Watson."

"Don't say 'be's,' Babe," said Babe's mother, "and stop pouting. I can't

tell where he gets that," she sighed, looking at the man. But the man's black brows were meeting over his nose, and his cane had left off beating, and was punching holes, very hard, in the gravel.

"Go and play, Babe," said Babe's mother, helplessly.

There was an appeal in her blue eyes that even Babe felt. He was fond of his little mother, and she clearly did not wish him to be near her. She never did—lately.

He turned and went off, rather forlornly, dragging his hat by a streamer. When he reached the little ruin of a Summer-house, he sat on the lowest step, and again ground his toes in the gravel.

Though he could not define his feelings, he knew there was a lump inside him somewhere, and it hurt. Now and then, it would grow quite large, and he wished to put down his head and cry; but he was too big for that, of course. Had he been four, he might have done it; but he was five, and wore trousers.

Some of the lump melted away as he looked at these emblems of his manhood. They were blue, and fitted tightly. He thrust his hands deep into the pockets, and stretched out his legs, just as father did. He smiled down at them happily until he remembered that father did not smile. Then, he drew the baby-curves of his red mouth into a firm, tight line, and looked out before him with grave, thoughtful eyes. He was so sure he looked like father now that he gave a joyful cry.

"Mother, look at me! Who do I

look like, mother? Is it father? Mother, look!"

But Babe's mother did not hear him. She was looking down at a rose, and the hands that held it trembled. Her cheeks were pinker than Babe's own, and, once, her eyelids fluttered and closed. The man leaning over her was talking fast and very low.

Babe sighed, and drew his legs up again. The interest in them had faded. How stupid it was, sitting here! Why didn't mother go back to the cottage? The man would leave her, then. He would be glad of that, because mother never wished him near her when the man was there.

Father was coming to-night, too! The thought brought a little thrill of gladness. Father came every Saturday, and all day Sunday Babe could sit by him, and copy everything he did. When Babe asked him a question, father would say, "Yes, yes!" until Babe had asked three times; then, father would start, and, looking at Babe just as if he hadn't been right there beside him all the time, would say:

"What's that, old fellow? Father didn't hear you."

Often, Babe wished father would hear the first time, but, then, he wouldn't be father, so that was a silly wish. And to-day was Saturday! Watson had told him so when she washed his face—to keep him still. Mother ought to go back, in order to be ready for father. He never came until dark; sometimes, if the train was late, not until after Babe was asleep. But Babe felt sure it must be nearly time for the dark to come. Suppose it came, and father with it, and there was no one waiting on the porch to be carried, piggy-back, up the stair?

This was too sad a thought! Two tears glistened in Babe's eyes. He curled up on the warm step, and was nearly forgetting he was five, and had trousers, when a faint "tink-a-tink" caught his ear.

Babe made of his eyes two blue, tear-drenched circles. It was a pretty sound; Babe knew it well. It meant glittering waters and grassy banks.

It meant clear, smooth pebbles, and turtles that went "ker-flop," when you poked them. It meant bull-frogs, and, maybe, fish!

"Tink-a-tink-a-tink!" The sound seemed to come from somewhere back of the Summer-house. Babe glanced at his mother. Her back was toward him, and her pretty, sunny head was close to the man's dark one. They were murmuring together.

No, Babe would not ask her. She had said, "Go and play." So he would—with the turtles.

With something of the feeling of an explorer, Babe, in no small excitement, hurried in the direction of the sound. It required only a little walking, a great deal of pushing through rank and tangled grasses, a small number of stumbles, a scratch or two, and then—there he was! Babe sat on his heels, frog-fashion, pushed back his hat, and gazed about him, a little grimy as to dirt, a little short of breath.

"Land sakes!" ejaculated Babe. This was Watson's favorite expression, but he had recently adopted it for his own.

Such a sunny, grassy, merry, ripply, happy little spot—just the place for a boy to play! Broad, benevolent-looking rocks offered superior jumping-places; green-leaved trees gave deep, delicious shade, and suggested unusual opportunities for the game of "Indian;" a little, laughing breeze made the sailing of leaf-boats something more than a possibility; and, as for turtles—there were no less than six now sunning their lazy backs on a moss-grown rock.

Just one little sigh that there was no one to share his discovery, and Babe fell to playing a great deal harder than most of us work. For a full half-hour, he ran, bare-headed, happy-faced, up and down, poking the turtles, with a cry of delight at each "ker-flop," trying to catch the agile little "skaters" as they darted, swift-legged, where the brook curbed its wild frolicking, and grew gentle and serene by the rushes on shore; launching fleet after fleet of gay little boats that sailed bravely

away to meet a tragic welcome from the hoydenish brook.

Then, the serpent entered. He wrestled with the tempter's voice, but at each whisper his efforts grew more weak, until, gazing into the brook's merry bubbling, he said, loudly, as if the noise must drown his conscience:

"Mother wouldn't mind. Wading's nice for little boys!"

It was but the work of an instant to fling aside his boots, broad-toed, like father's, the stockings crammed inside. And then—oh, then, the cold, bright water was racing past his ankles, running through his toes and, perhaps, splashing the tight blue trousers just a trifle; but one can't think of things like these when one is wading!

He thought of it later, however, when, tired and a little cold, he scrambled up on the bank to view what he could not but admit was a wreck of his former self. The proud blue beauty of his trousers had been ruined. They clung, wet and dejected, to his legs, which shivered and shook, in spite of his efforts to control them. He pulled the resisting stockings over damp and clammy feet, and thrust them into the broad-toed boots in chilly haste. The brook looked cold and comfortless; much of the beauty of his play-ground had departed.

A little, miserable figure enough, he stole back through the tangled grasses, and up the slope until the Summer-house was reached; then, curling up like a half-drowned kitten on the warm step, in a comforting dazzle of sunshine, Babe fell asleep.

He came back with a shiver, after dreaming of a dangerous encounter with a turtle, which, not satisfied with whipping him, cast him, screaming, into the brook to drown, and found his mother pulling at his arm.

"Babe!" she cried; "wake up, child; we must go!"

Babe fought the hand a moment, having a misty impression that it was the turtle's paw; then, he looked about him, drowsy-eyed. He had been asleep more than an hour. The trees

were pierced with shafts of red sunset light.

The man, who was not frowning now, but smiling instead, as one who is victorious, helped Babe's mother to get the child on his feet, and, together, they went out into the road, leaving the trees, the ruined Summer-house and the brook behind them.

Babe pinched the legs of his trousers as he walked along. They were still damp in places, and those spots that had dried were rough and wrinkled. He shot a timid glance up at his mother, but she was not looking at him. Instead, her gaze sought the hills where the sun lingered. Her eyes were like the sun, Babe thought, and her cheeks flamed and glowed until he forgot his troubles in watching them.

"Pretty!" he whispered, softly.

The man always left at a turn in the road, just before their cottage came in sight. He did so to-night. He lifted his hat high to Babe's mother, and held her fingers for a very long time. Babe wished they would hurry, so that he could go home. He was tired, and the sun, as it sank, left the air chill. But, in another moment, the man had gone, and Babe's mother, clasping the child's hand in her own, hurried on, swiftly.

It was good to be in a warm, lighted place again, and better still to change the damp trousers for the best corduroy pair. His heart beat guiltily as his mother undressed him. Now, she would discover that he had been in wading! But, though she looked at him with eyes more brilliant than he had ever before seen them, she did not say a word. At dinner, when Babe spoke, she did not answer until the third time, and sometimes not even then.

After dinner, the dark came, and a great, round moon with it. Babe knew any minute might bring father; but, somehow, he could not feel glad. Something within him was strange. There was a pain in his head, and, though the room was warm, he shivered.

"Come to bed, Babe," said Babe's mother, though it was not bedtime;

and the child, opening his mouth to say, "Oh, mother, let me stay up for father!" saw the lights dance suddenly, and then grow dim. Clutching at his mother's skirt, he allowed himself to be led away without a murmur.

Babe's mother did not often tuck him in, but to-night she came to him, and, as she leaned above his little bed, Babe saw her eyes grow large with tears.

"Babe," she whispered, "do you love your mother?"

Babe, sitting up in bed, vowed his affection stoutly.

"You have not had much cause to," said Babe's mother, and she did not seem to be speaking to Babe. "I hope you don't—I hope you don't!" And she turned out the light quickly, saying, sharply: "Go to sleep!"

Babe lay quite still, but he did not go to sleep. His mother's words lay heavy on his heart. "Do you love your mother, Babe?" He could hear her voice, and see her lovely, tear-bright eyes.

She must know! That was his first thought. Perhaps, she had noticed the trousers, after all, and had cried to think he could be so naughty. She thought a boy who would do such a thing couldn't love his mother. But he could—he knew he could! He loved his mother dearly, and he hadn't thought it naughty—not so very—at the time. The water was so sparkling and cool, and Watson had let him wade when they were all at the seashore, last Summer. If only Watson were here! He would tell her all about it—he would not be afraid—and Watson would take him into her big, motherly arms, and say, "Why, Babe, you ain't a naughty boy, at all!" But would she? A wave of fear followed the thought. She would take him in her arms, yes; but she would tell him he had been very naughty and must tell mother all about it, and, oh, dear! how could he do that, when it would make her cry harder, and think that he really and truly didn't love her?

Babe crouched in the farthest corner of his little bed, and buried his face in

the covers. He could feel his heart thumping against his ribs, and his cheeks burned. One moment, his teeth chattered with cold; the next, he must throw off the covers, or die.

But he didn't believe mother knew, after all! How could she, when she had had her back turned all the time, and he had been gone such a tiny little while? A guilty thrill stole through him, but, the next moment, it was gone.

The sharp, shooting pain that crossed Babe's forehead was followed by another and still another. He could hear his breath as it swept out, making a hoarse, grating sound in the quiet room. Was it always so hard for little boys when they were bad?

At the far end of his room, a square of yellow light marked his mother's door. He could see her when she moved across it. He sat up in bed, waiting for her to appear, his tearful eyes gazing pitifully out of the darkness. If he only dared tell!

Hark! was that the train's whistle? Was father coming? For the first time in his baby life, he did not wish to see father—father had always thought him such a good boy. He swallowed the lump that would come, and felt himself to be very little and very miserable and very, very bad.

His mother was passing and re-passing the door now; once, she carried an armful of clothing, and Babe could see her cramming it into the valise which had been his present on her birthday. She almost ran to and fro. And once, when her face was lifted a moment from her work, Babe noted, with a pang, that all the bright color was gone, and in its place was a pallor which struck like a blow on his childish heart. Was she still thinking he did not love her?

She was standing in the centre of the room now, pinning on her hat. It was not the pretty one with the pink flowers—that was his favorite—but a small, dark one, and she had covered her dainty dress with a long, black cloak. Where was she going? Was it to meet father? But she

never did that. Then, a sudden terror smote him, and, in the darkness, his heart seemed to stop. Perhaps, she was going to get another little boy! The day he took her watch down from the bureau to make a pendulum for his clock, she had said she would get a new boy if he ever was so naughty again. And he had been naughty again!

His breath was growing noisier and noisier; there was a strange hoarseness in his chest; all at once, a cough rattled from him; it sounded like the barking of a dog. Was this what happened to bad boys? Did they change to dogs, for cruel children to chase?

But his mother was going. She hurried by, with the valise in her hand. The next moment, she was opening the door that led out into the hall. All the agony and terror he had suffered for the last half-hour went out in a long, piercing wail:

"Mother! mother! Don't go! I'll be good! I'm sorry! Oh, mother, mother!"

Then, the terrible, barking sound came from him, and he fell back on the pillow, gasping.

After what seemed an eternity to Babe's mother, the doctor came, and together they worked to overcome that monster-demon of childhood—croup. Now, the doctor and the mother would be winning in the fight; now, the monster seemed succeeding.

"If his father would only come!" wailed Babe's mother, in an anguish; "of all times, why should the train be late to-night!"

But, at last, there came a moment when Babe could lie peacefully, without the cruel cough shaking him. His breathing grew more gentle, his head cooler, and the monster, dismayed at these symptoms, stole quietly away.

"Try to get him to sleep," said the doctor, as he said good night; "it will do the little chap more good than the medicine. I shall be in again in the morning—early."

Babe's mother lowered the light, until it shone like a taper in the darkened room; then, she drew the covering about Babe's shoulders. She was whiter than Babe, and her eyes had a wan, tired, heart-sick look in them, that roused Babe from the lethargy into which he was falling.

"I'm sorry I was bad," he whispered; "I won't never do it again, I won't."

"Do what, Babe?" She thought his mind was wandering, and spoke to soothe him.

"Go wading," came the answer, with startling directness; "and I won't never do it again. But the water was so sparkly and cool, and there was turtles——"

Babe's mother stood staring, a hand to her heart.

"In wading, Babe! When—where?"

"But I won't never do it again!" cried Babe, in despair.

His mother sat down beside him, on the edge of the little bed. With his hand in hers, and her arm under his head, he told her.

When he had finished, there was a silence. "Tick-tock; tick-tock," went the little blue clock on the mantel. At last, Babe looked up, timidly. The tears were overflowing in his mother's eyes.

"I'm sorry!" he whimpered, rubbing his cheek against her arm.

The arm suddenly caught him up, and held him tight against a heart whose beating he could feel.

"My baby! mother's little boy!" And, though the tears were falling on his cheeks and hands, Babe thrilled with happiness. He was forgiven.

Babe's mother held him, as if she could never let him go.

"Can you forgive your mother, Babe," she whispered, her lips on his hair, "even if she can never forgive herself?"

Babe nestled closer, with a sleepy laugh.

"Mothers aren't never bad!" he answered, sagely.

They sat together in the great

rocking-chair, Babe in his mother's arms—undignified for five, perhaps, but very comforting. Then, as Babe's mother was singing a delightful little song—all about a frog with "a sword and pistol by his side"—the door opened, and there stood father.

Babe smiled a sleepy welcome, but he was too steeped in drowsiness to speak. He heard his mother's whispered, "Hush!" and felt the pillow sink beneath his head. With one lazy eye, he watched his mother cross the room on tip-toe and, pausing, lay both hands on father's breast.

"I have needed you," she whispered; "oh, my husband, how I have needed you!"

Babe's father looked at her a moment, wondering; then, a smile that had in it all the joy of a new day, rose like the sun on his grave face, as, putting an arm about her girlish shoulder, he led her out of the darkness into the radiance of the other room.

And Babe, lying snug and warm, and happy with that happiness confession brings, turned on his pillow, and, smiling, slept.



THE SILVER LINING

I MET the maiden I adore
 Upon the Avenue;
 She wore a stunning tailor-gown,
 A dream of gold and blue.
 A chap I hate was at her side,
 And both of them, alas!
 Were so absorbed in merry chat
 That neither saw me pass.

I watched them enter a café,
 Where oft we used to dine;
 My fancy saw them *vis-à-vis*
 Across the fruit and wine.
 But one reflection gave a coat
 Of sugar to the pill:
 This time it was the other man
 Who had to pay the bill!

MINNA IRVING.



HIS PRACTICE

KNICKER—How did he become an expert accountant?

BOCKER—Proving to his wife that it was twelve when he came home at three.



A WOMAN doesn't always get the last word—sometimes she is talking to another woman.

THE FAITHFUL DUGAN

By Juliet Wilbor Tompkins

IT was not that Joyce really objected to paying his dinner call; but Mrs. Callender's extreme punctiliousness, the lack of perspective that made her class social obligations with the Ten Commandments, irritated him, tempting him to defiance. Mrs. Callender had cut him for two years, with portentous solemnity, because he had—what the dickens had he done? It was something about an unpaid dinner call when Agnes Callender came out. And, now that chance had restored him to her magisterial favor, she had placed him firmly on her left hand, and devoted the hours of Rose's coming-out dinner to a veiled lecture on social obligations. Rose seemed like a nice girl, and he was ready enough to celebrate her coming out, and help her have a good time. But, if the reconciliation were to mean any more such ordeals— His restless eyes encountered a humorous beam in the lazy glance of Bobby Redmond across the table. Evidently, he too had been subjected to the stool of repentance in his time. A mischievous desire to get even with the stately and jeweled autocrat rose in Joyce's rebellious soul, and, at that instant, he happened to lift his glance to the man who was serving him.

At Mrs. Callender's table, naturally, no recognition was possible between server and served; yet, the kindly, ugly face of good old Dugan, who had for seven years presided over his mother's table in the days of their prosperity, and done his warm-hearted best to pamper and spoil the young man of the house!—Joyce could have cried over the meeting. He managed a mur-

mured, "Well, Dugan!" as his hostess turned aside, and saw a warm light in the eye nearest him, as the man filled his glass with an arm that lingered affectionately over the task.

When the women had left the room, Joyce turned to Dugan with outstretched hand, and they exchanged eager questions of health and welfare. Then, Joyce came back to the present, with a sigh.

"So, now you're with Mrs. Callender," he said, his tone a covert question. Dugan was reserved on the subject of Mrs. Callender. This gave Joyce an inspiration. At a tentative suggestion, Dugan met him more than half-way. No question as to which side held his loyalty! And, presently, two of Joyce's visiting-cards were slipped into the faithful hand. They were to be presented in due course, within the requisite ten days, as from a punctilious caller who had been so unfortunate as to find the ladies not at home. There was triumph in Joyce's eye as he joined his hostess later.

Rose Callender, like so many daughters of dominant women, was a very attractive girl when she was away from home. In the shadow of the dowager, her individuality paled and shrank, she became a placer of foot-stools, and an adjuster of lace shawls. She quite adored her mother, and, when a man visitor appeared, never dreamed of appropriating any more of his attention than her mother graciously turned over to her. Mrs. Callender's daughters did not receive callers without her; which is, perhaps, one reason why she was obliged to distribute so much lofty rebuke for sins of omission.

It was Rose's little way of blossoming out unexpectedly into a delicious spiritedness that wrought Joyce's undoing. Finding her at the Towerses', where he had gone for one of their famous over-Sundays, he conceived a kindly idea of being nice to her, feeling vaguely sorry for any one who had to be brought up by Mrs. Callender. That walk down the length of Mrs. Towers's drawing-room with a cup of tea in either hand, proved afterward the most momentous trip of his life. Rose had just been driven up from the station, and was holding her cold hands to the fire. As he gave her the tea, she lifted her face, with the Winter red bright in her cheeks, and Joyce, usually the least clumsy of men, forgot, for the moment, his other cup. There was an ominous little clatter, and then a brown stream over her knee.

"Don't say it doesn't matter; I know I've spoiled it," he exclaimed, bending over her, distressedly, as she rubbed her gown with his handkerchief. She looked up with a gleam in her eyes, hesitating. Then:

"It feels so nice and warm!" she confided to him, with a little rush of laughter.

Joyce brought fresh tea, and loved her from that moment.

They had such pleasant times, during the twenty-four hours which followed, that Bobby Redmond, who always wanted what any one else had, and, being richer than most, generally got it, decided that he was missing something, and appropriated Rose to himself Sunday evening. Joyce acknowledged irritably that Bobby had other weapons besides money—startlingly brown eyes set in a white skin, a cleft chin and a straight nose, a direct method unvexed by subtleties; while his plumpness as yet only produced an effect of boyish candor. Joyce himself, comparatively poor, slight of frame, not remarkable of feature, was frankly the better fellow of the two; but would Rose see that? And—more disheartening still—would Mrs. Callender?

Mrs. Callender's attitude was shown

with appalling clearness a couple of nights later, at a dance to which the hope of seeing Rose had dragged Joyce. Her eagle lorgnon had taken in the situation at a glance; Redmond and Joyce already in full rivalry, and Rose more than half-inclined the wrong way, of course! Mrs. Callender closed her lorgnon with a click that meant business. She was all ready for Joyce when he, with futile diplomacy, took the chair beside her, toward the end of the evening.

"I suppose your daughter has told you what a delightful Sunday we had at the Towerses'," he began, with a friendliness that mutely begged a response. Mrs. Callender looked him over, coolly.

"Ah—were you there?" she said. It was a declaration of war, and Joyce accepted it manfully, though with a heavy heart.

"I was so fortunate," he answered, gravely, and, for an instant, their eyes met. Rose came back at that moment, laughing, a torn length of chiffon held up in one hand.

"I'm afraid it is beyond the help of pins!" she said.

Her mother rose. "It is time we went, my dear," she said, with a formal bow of dismissal to Joyce.

He boldly took Rose's hand. "Shall you be at home to-morrow?" he asked. There was unmistakable assent in her eyes, but before she could speak her mother interposed:

"My dear, you have an engagement to-morrow afternoon. I doubt if we shall be at home this week at all," she added, firmly, to Joyce, and he could only bow stiffly and submit. Rose's troubled eyes were dutifully lowered, and she looked suddenly small and young and helpless as she followed her imposing parent down the brilliant rooms.

Joyce had been clearly forbidden the house, and he accepted the check grimly, troubled, yet not dismayed. But he reckoned without Dugan, whom, indeed, he had completely forgotten. The following day being the seventh from the night of Rose's coming

out, Joyce's cards were found brazenly spread out on a salver. Mrs. Callender stared at them speechlessly, Rose flushing and paling at her elbow, then held them up to the unblinking Dugan.

"This afternoon?" she demanded, in her deepest notes.

Dugan affirmed it cheerfully, and even fixed the hour, in the generosity of his devotion. After his mistress had swept on, he returned the cards to his pocket. Another call would do his young gentleman no harm with his punctilious mistress. Up-stairs, Mrs. Callender turned to her daughter.

"That — I — consider — insolence," she said, heavily. "You will please me by dropping all acquaintance with this young man, Rose."

The girl went to her room in dismayed silence. Of course, in one way, it was very brave of him to come, rather splendid and defiant, but—Her delicacy was offended, and she could not defend him from the charge of bad taste.

Two weeks later, Mrs. Callender, in full panoply of velvet and pearls, took the front of the box, distributing Rose and Bobby Redmond with masterly nods, and prepared to give a dignified attention to "Tristan." Though not a glance betrayed her, she was perfectly aware that Bobby was leaning forward, elbow on knee, directing his murmured confidences to the back of Rose's chair, and her stately head became even more erect. Truly, she had done well by her children! Rose's somewhat languid response did not trouble her; the affair, in her eyes, lay wholly between Redmond and herself. After two weeks of skilful and delicate engineering, she felt that she could afford to relax a little. She folded her hands complacently, and turned her back on them in token of her satisfaction.

The change brought her within range of a muttered conversation between two young men in the next box. For all their caution, their voices carried through the music, and Mrs. Callender's ears were terribly keen.

"Looks as if old Bobby were in for it," she heard, presently, and her

bosom lifted a little, though not a muscle of her majestic countenance betrayed her. The other man laughed.

"Not he! Told me last night she was the nicest girl he'd ever known, but he couldn't go the mother-in-law."

"Well, it would be pretty fierce," assented the first, with a smothered laugh.

"Rather! She's keen after him, too. He's going South next week, duck-shooting. Running for his life, I fancy. Ever been——?"

The conversation drifted to other matters. Mrs. Callender sat with perfectly composed features, her judicial eyes on the stage. When the curtain fell on the act, she swept the house indifferently with her glass, then turned to her daughter.

"Mama, Mr. Redmond has been telling me about a trip he intends to take—duck-shooting," Rose said, with a polite effort, after general conversation.

"Yes? We shall miss him," said Mrs. Callender, graciously. There was not a flaw in her proud serenity, even in the dark of the carriage afterward, or when her own front door had closed upon them.

The next day, she kept her room with a nervous headache, and Rose, very sorry and daughterly, read to her, and waited on her, and bore with her querulous bitterness until late afternoon, when Mrs. Callender fell asleep, and she was free for a quick walk. The Winter sky flamed red behind the houses, and she paused a moment on the steps to draw a deep breath of the clean, cool air. Then, the red flashed up into her cheeks, and she took an impulsive step forward.

"I haven't seen you for so long!" Joyce was saying, incoherently, his wits hopelessly scattered by the tremor of the hand within his.

"Weeks and weeks!" Rose laughed, radiantly, and then self-possession returned to them both, and they walked up the Avenue in a golden haze, conscious of a red sky and clean, crisp air and shining horses and beautiful, kind people who bowed in passing, and a

world full of friendliness that centered about them, and wished them well. If Rose had a guilty pang, it did not last beyond the first block, and the matter of the call was wilfully forgotten.

The little winding paths of the Park led them this way and that, without their noticing. When a stretch of ice caused Rose the least possible slip, he flung a quick arm about her for an instant. After that, they talked blindly for some paces, carrying on a show of casualness, though their hearts had stopped at that moment like clocks at an earthquake. The sky faded out and left them to bare, black tree stems and thickening darkness.

"We must go back!" she said, startled. And so they retraced the winding paths, laughing like guilty children at the hour. Just before they emerged, his hand closed over hers for a moment, and they gave up the pretense of words, walking with averted faces.

"Rose!" he whispered. Her shoulder brushed his arm. Then, suddenly, something within her took fright, and the glamour vanished in an instant. After all, he was a man who had offended her taste, whom her mother did not wish her to know. It was cold and dark, and she ought to be at home. The little excursion into romance was over.

She entered her house guiltily, trembling at possible questions, just as her mother trailed languidly down the stairs.

"Ought you to have come down, mama?" she began, eager to divert attention.

"Oh, it does not matter," sighed Mrs. Callender, turning over the cards on the salver. One of them made her pause and lift her lorgnon as

though to be sure. She considered a moment, with cold, far-seeing eyes. Then, she turned to the attendant Dugan.

"When did Mr. Joyce call?" she asked; and her tone was mild.

"About half an hour ago, madame; or it might be less," said Dugan, with an air of conscientious accuracy.

Rose stared at him, blankly. She opened her lips to speak, then hastily closed them, with a frightened glance toward her mother, and bent over the card, holding it with fingers that trembled. It was most extraordinary! Her mother's voice recalled her scattered wits.

"Rose," she said, indifferently, turning into the drawing-room, "why don't you write and ask Mr. Joyce to dine with us some night next week?"

Rose's eyes were amazingly big. "You—wish me to?" she finally stammered.

"Certainly; or I should not have suggested it," was the majestic answer.

Rose, after her mother had gone, turned a penetrating glance on the old servant. "Dugan," she began, firmly, "Mr. Joyce did not call this afternoon."

"Indeed, miss," he was protesting; but she cut him short with a sudden light of inspiration in her eyes.

"And he did not call that other time!" she exclaimed. The man would have lied valiantly for his dear young gentleman, but she ran upstairs, singing, and gave him no chance.

"And there I've gone and made trouble for him!" said Dugan, sorrowfully.

But Joyce bore no malice, and Rose was equally forgiving, and Mrs. Callender never knew.



A PREFERENCE

GIRL—I always take a hansom.

CHAPPIE—With you, I'd prefer to take a buss.

WE CHOOSE A NAME

By Frank Roe Batchelder

I

WHAT shall I call my little nook
That's sacred to the Pipe and Book?

SHE

At least, it must not be "The Den;"
That's used by myriads of men.

I

"Sanctum Sanctorum" wouldn't do?

SHE

That's ancient, and pedantic, too.
Choose something bright and to the point.

I

Well, then, suppose we say "The Joint"?

SHE

But that suggests "the other half;"
Besides, there's nothing here to quaff.

I

There will be, though, behind that screen!

SHE

Then, why not say "The New Canteen"?

I

You're scoffing, now. Why not "The Club"?

SHE

In lieu of that, I'd say "The Tub."

I

Wash-, bath-, or butter-, if you please?

SHE

Foolish! I mean Diogenes—
Because you're very wise, you see!

THE SMART SET

I

Come, come; you're only teasing me;
Be serious.

SHE

And so I will.
"The Scribbler" might fill the bill.

I

Too much like "Snuggery," and that
I always thought uncommon flat.

SHE

What do you say to "The Retreat"?
I think, myself, that's rather neat.

I

It's inappropriate, at least;
I'm neither general nor priest.
I'd thought of this: "The Upper Berth."

SHE

Say "Section"—get your money's worth!

I

Don't jest—I want a clever name.

SHE

"The Sonnet Shop" might urge its claim;
Or, would you like "The Studio"?

I

Oh, that would never do, you know!
Why, every "fakir" known to fame
Has a first mortgage on that name.

SHE

Well, here's a better one: "The Cave."

I

H'm! Isn't that almost too grave?

SHE

Then, you'll of course reject "The Cell"?
Now, that's unique—I like it well.

I

Oh, for a monk 'twould be sublime—
Or any one who's "doing time."

SHE

Well, if you don't "do" Time, you goose,
For loafing here you've no excuse.

I

Why not "The Lounge," or just "The Nook"?

SHE

But what about the Pipe and Book?
I thought they were supposed, my dear,
To be the idols worshiped here.
"The Pipery" sounds rather new.

I

Too artificial—that won't do.
"The Castle," now—is that too vain?

SHE

Ah! now I have it: call it "Spain"!

I

Why "Spain"? Your meaning isn't clear.

SHE

Because you build air-castles here.

I

The Book and Pipe we still neglect.

SHE

"The Smokehouse," then, you'll not reject?
Or, say "The Burrow"—that would fit
A bookworm's haunt, you must admit.

I

My love, I fear this name will be
A thing on which we can't agree.
'Twas just a common Room before;
Suppose I paint upon the door
A simple phrase that fits the case,
And tells the story: "*Jack—His Place.*"



A CHANGE OF OPINION

"YES, my poor Willie is married, and his marriage is the saddest mistake, though he hasn't found it out yet! Ah, well, no one but a mother can really see the faults of a son's wife!"

"Too bad he did not marry that lovely girl you liked so much! You remember, you said she was a perfect model, and you were so happy that he had chosen such a gentle, amiable, womanly girl. Her name was Gertrude—Gertrude Snow."

"Why—er—ah—he—he married Gertrude Snow!"

THE GOLDEN LIE

I WOULD not hear the truth—ah, no! Repeat
 That thou wilt love me till the stars grow cold!
 I had far rather that I be not told
 The measured length of Love's "forever"! Cheat
 My heart with vows, still glowing and unworn,
 That lovers through all centuries have sworn
 While they knelt prayerful at their ladies' feet!

I would not hear the truth! Though Time be fleet,
 Tell me *our* days shall linger in Love's thrall!
 I know that flowers fade, and planets fall—
 Pour me the lotus-wine of Love's deceit!
 Take oath "forever"! With that golden lie
 Veil Truth, the Gorgon! Time enough to die
 When we shall find such falsehood no more sweet!

ELISABETH R. FINLEY.



HIS CHIEF CONCERN

SHE—You must see papa, dear, about our marriage. But don't be anxious about the outcome.

HE—What I'm anxious about is the income.



FAME'S LADDER

	top, and
its	then
to	come
struggle	down
we	again
round,	without
after	a
Round	stop!



THE average young woman doesn't wish to see her thirtieth birthday; yet, when she has seen it, she would like to see it again.

THE PASSING OF THE ARISTOCRAT

By Elizabeth Duer

THE American aristocrat is passing; he is yielding place to the rich man. As a personage, he is becoming as rare as the platypus, that connecting link between the slow-moving and the flying, and, like the strange quadruped, must be considered as a survival. His prestige has been taken from him by the newborn child of to-day, the plutocrat, a modern production, whose past seems to concern no one, and whose future is still a riddle, but whose present is regarded by the outside world with amazement, respect and envy.

The simple truth is, that the aristocrat has passed his usefulness. He still has representatives, descendants of the country's great men; but the days when he could do great deeds are over; for present emergencies, he lacks adaptability. At the time of the Revolution, we needed brave and intelligent gentlemen. These we found in our aristocratic class, and, remembering their achievements, we are too apt to assume that qualities such as theirs are the only ones that can make their mark. It is true, these distinguished patriots made the country, but it is the plutocrat who is developing it; it is he who now embodies its necessities. Not only our worship of money has given him his supremacy, but our recognition of his services—perhaps, too, our Yankee reverence for brains. We are proud of him as the exponent of national ability, and inclined to the belief that the same business capacity lurks in us all, only waiting the golden moment of opportunity to place us by

his side. Moreover, example upon example has shown that the intelligence, that amassed a princely fortune produces also a fairly respectable prince, enormously receptive in culture, generous and magnificent. What wonder that society is willing to be represented by such a one, even though he may fail to conform to old-fashioned standards in minor particulars! There is no question of making the best of him; he has made such a good best of himself, that even we of an older generation like him as well as the original article, the aristocrat, whose claims are hard to define in plain speech, but whose departing charm is still fraught with romance. To elucidate this charm, and to understand the class that is vanishing, we must go back to the early days of the Republic, when we were still virtually English.

The Revolution, in giving us a separate nationality, had not destroyed time-honored traditions. Our manners and customs were English, bred in the bone; our point of view that of the Mother Country. Freedom and equality were political terms that no one dreamed of applying to social life. What gave position at that time was inherited distinction. Its possession was free from self-consciousness—simply an advantage of birth, which that Providence who had always shown an affinity to hierarchies, saw fit to bestow on a favored class. The community was divided by the grace of God into gentlemen—and others; perhaps, it would be more exact to say, gentlemen, their servants and others. The privacy of these

gentlemen concerned themselves only; there were no "social happenings" heralded in their newspapers to force notoriety upon family life. How it would have astonished those early aristocrats, if they could have anticipated the fictitious importance later days would attach to their privileges!

Perhaps, in theory, the newly rich may smile at the claims of long descent, but, in practice, they seem surprisingly willing to court the class tradition has placed above them; indeed, such association is usually the crowning glory of their success.

"With a great price obtained I this freedom," the modern centurion of plutocracy exclaims, and the aristocrat might well reply, "But I was born free." The right to take rank among his peers underlies his whole attitude toward life. He neither over-estimates the position of others, nor distrusts his own fitness. His place in life is inalienably his own, unless forfeited by conduct unbecoming a gentleman. How few lapses there were among the old gentry from their high estate is greatly to their credit. Now and then, a rumor comes down through the past century that some ancestor of a historic family had been under a cloud, but his misdeeds were spoken of with dignified reserve, and his children reinstated in the position their progenitor had disgraced. Class feeling did much toward preserving the prestige of our old families. There was among them a sense of mutual obligation and interdependence that would seem quite at variance with the individual life of to-day. Undoubtedly, the narrow limits of the upper class were responsible for the closeness of its affiliations. You can hardly trace back four generations in any family tree, without coming upon a network of relationship and intermarriage that makes the whole order kin. Proud and exclusive, in spite of the simplicity that marked their life, the doors of these aristocrats were seldom open to the invasion of outsiders. They needed no reinforce-

ments from the ranks below, and families did not die out in those vigorous times. Each patrician dame presented her liege lord with at least a dozen little representatives, and neither bemoaned the inconvenience nor feared for their future welfare.

The mission of the girls was to marry within their own class, while the boys were brought up to be useful, self-supporting citizens. Idleness was not encouraged, for the family fortune, no matter how ample, ceased to merit the name when divided among twelve. The sort of shiftlessness which, nowadays, contents itself with an income barely sufficient to pay club dues, and to board a polo pony, was unheard of; a gentleman owed more than that to himself.

Not being cursed with the laws of primogeniture, each child had an equal place and an equal share; and, if there happened to be a black sheep in the flock, there were plenty of worthy sons left to carry on the name. It is hardly too much to affirm that the passing of our aristocracy is coincident with the passing of the large family.

The old-time gentlefolk were careful as to ways and means in getting rich, and chose their professions among such as were thought to become persons of position. The church, the law and medicine were considered preëminently respectable—with a slight partiality toward the law. Banking and shipping were tolerated; while the army and navy boasted the best blood in the land. To be a broker of any kind was deplored, and retail trade was a positive bar to social recognition. The arts were mistrusted. A son who thumped the piano, or scraped the fiddle, could hardly come to much good, and a painter had to attain success before he met with much sympathy. An architect was more kindly judged, because his fancy was bound by utility; but the one only genius positively admired was the literary man. Our old American aristocracy respected letters.

As money came by slow and time-honored channels, great fortunes were rare, and the contrasts in expenditure, among those in the same social plane, by no means noticeable. Now, hospitality has become a fine art, and to return entertainments of lavish magnificence with the simple resources of an ordinary establishment, requires a courage and self-respect of no mean order.

Naturally, it was the women, then as now, who gave society its tone, and their characters were a strange conglomeration of the high-minded and the petty. Their experience was usually confined to their own narrow circle—not cosmopolitan, as at present—and, consequently, full of traditional prejudice. But the Revolutionary women had been bred in a school of great events, and under the ennobling pressure of personal interest, in a struggle which demanded the sacrifice of all that was dearest, and the result was an elevation of character that persisted through several generations. To this was added an executive ability in household economics little understood to-day.

Up to the middle of the last century, domestic comfort lay largely with the lady of the house. It was on her intelligence—what Mrs. Stowe calls her “faculty”—brought to bear upon home administration, that the family welfare depended. Housekeeping was a business necessitating an especial training, which passed from mother to daughter. Entertaining meant an amount of preparation, on the part of the hostess, that most modern women would shrink from facing. To keep a dozen children in order, to oversee the manufacture of half the things now found at the grocer’s, to wash up the fine breakfast-cups, and to superintend the family sewing—all entered into the daily life of the first ladies of the land. They took their reading seriously, and formed their literary taste upon Pope and Addison, and dipped deep in the well of English undefiled. As novels came more into fashion, they delighted in Miss Edgeworth, Miss Austen, and

then in Scott. Their minds were not sullied by a polyglot impression of sensuality in half the different languages of Europe, and, if the restriction of their reading made them narrow and unsympathetic, and less able to deal justly with the facts of life, it gave their minds a purity which many might covet to-day. Our present familiarity with vice has made us somewhat callous to its “hideous mien.” Our grandmothers actually preferred decent behavior, even in books.

These strong-minded old ladies knew exceedingly well what they would tolerate, and what was offensive. A certain formality was preserved, even in the family circle. Children and servants were taught to submit to discipline. The habit of command, so large a factor in the dignity of the best manners, was of necessity fostered. The heads of the house made themselves respected; their authority was law, and they exacted a kind of home etiquette now fast disappearing from the land.

The young people were not allowed to run up intimacies where their parents did not visit. Such terms as “high-bred” and “vulgar,” “well-born” and “common,” were applied with a plain directness of speech that we, of to-day, would find brutal—or, worse—impolitic. We have had a vision since then as of a great sheet let down by the four corners, wherein is a fine assemblage of all sorts and conditions of rich men, and the message added, “What gold has cleansed, that call not thou common.”

Alack and alas! the melancholy truth is that gold does cleanse; it eliminates a whole class of mean motives and self-deceptions which beset the noblest when fortune is ebbing, and pride is brought low. As for the fortunes of our old American gentry, a large portion of them ebbed with the Civil War. In the South, there was annihilation of property; in the North, long-existing depression, and out of the general disaster rose the first plutocrats. Then, we called these sudden riches *shoddy*, and looked askance at the possessor; but, in many cases, the money was

honestly made in supplying the needs of Government at a critical time, and not, as the name implied, by carrying out contracts in the cheapest way.

Still, even thirty years ago, the newly rich were not welcomed, as now; a probation was required, possibly a marriage into one of the old families, which would stand sponsor for the aspirant for social recognition. Some questions were asked as to how he came by his money. We felt an interest in the means, as well as the result. Now, we want to be sure that he is rich enough to make his recognition worth while; and, then, we trust to luck that he is going to turn out the good fellow we would fain believe him.

After all, in judging ourselves and others, we must remember that it is not so much the men who make the times, as the times that make the men. We attribute to plutocratic influence, a host of modern sins, which, in reality, are the outcome of an age of pressure. The haste to get rich, the craze for luxury, the mad rush for amusement, may be crying evils, but only because of their excess; a modified greed would be a healthy ambition. But there is a spirit of unrest in the air. We seem in the toils of some great mechanical phantom that is revolutionizing our ideas, even to the minutest details of living. So many things have been brought within our reach that we want to grasp them all. It is the bottled-up thrift and parsimony of our ancestors revenging itself—their own qualities become wanton. All processes of maturing by time are thrown out, and science called in to replace Nature.

Our only motto seems to be,

"If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere
well
It were done quickly."

Whether it is centrifugal cream, or incubator babies, or the gentleman made out of the office-boy, well made or ill, it is all one to us; any device to save time and labor is acceptable. Sometimes, Nature hits back, and lays

us low with nervous prostration. *She* does not pretend to adapt herself to new conditions in a day.

To accommodate ourselves to this whirl, we ought to have a new nervous system, and, certainly, a new stomach—a new digestion—mental and physical, to take in the necessary reading and business and travel, the chemically preserved foods and adulterated drinks we are expected to assimilate. Perhaps, the next generation may find the equipment; but to those unfortunates who, like the aristocrat, are nearing their goal, the age seems overstrained to the breaking point. It would be pleasant to go back to a time when the reward of effort was leisure, rather than fresh opportunity for more exertion. It would even be pleasant to go back to old-time hospitality, and escape the stereotyped perfection of a chef's menu; to warm our blood with a little good port or old Madeira, instead of merely loosening our tongues with the inevitable champagne; once more to see the table stripped to its polished mahogany at the end of dinner, and the desert set out on its mirror-like surface. We would even listen patiently to the gossip of our host about the different decanters of Madeira making their slow round in their silver coasters, each with its name tied to its neck—"Wanderer," or "Eclipse," or "Juno"—usually christened by the vessel that brought it; and we should forbear to smile at the economy that withheld fresh wine-glasses, but furnished finger-bowls with two lips, in which a pair of wine-glasses could be washed and cooled at the same time. A very keen taste belonged to the past generations—a taste unvitiated by too much tobacco and cocktails and whiskey; ancestral excesses found revenge in gout, pure and simple, rather than premature senility. There seems a patriarchal, if reprehensible, simplicity in importing your own wine, and liking it a little too well, like Noah planting his vine, and falling a victim to his own vintage. Then, too, there was something deliberate and respectable in laying it down in your cellar forty years before you meant to drink

it, and passing it on to your children after you.

Then, it was distinguished to be deliberate; the highest class was truly a leisure class. Now, the greater the man the more overwhelming his affairs. No day-laborer is more pressed for time than our plutocrat. It is the one only thing he is unwilling to give to his friends. The door of his house is guarded by a colossus in livery, to say, "Not at 'ome," with haughty grace, and the privacy of his business sanctum is confided to the keeping of a phalanx of office-boys, the youngest of whom is capable of asking the King of England to state his business before submitting his card. The reason for all this is sufficiently patent; but it is not agreeable to play the part of *peri* at the gates of paradise.

Modern custom sanctions much that an older courtesy would have found insufferable. It would have been thought vulgar to obtrude business methods into private life; to answer a personal letter by dictation to a typewriter, or to invite your friends to dinner by an exchange of messages over the telephone between your butler and theirs. We are willing to concede the common-sense of such practices, but we must consider them, to say the least, inelegant. It is impossible not

to regret the loss of breeding that is passing with the aristocrat; but, if we can save something of his picturesqueness and dignity and chivalrous bearing, to soften the harsh utilitarianism of to-day, he will not have lived in vain.

It is easier to lament the past than to appreciate the present, unless you happen still to be in the rush and whirl of current events. Looking backward is a process apt to gild the days that are no more with sunset glories.

There was a deep knowledge of human nature in the old Greek myth of the Graiæ, the three gray sisters, who were always singing their melancholy song of why the old times were better than the new, and getting their only view of life through one solitary eye that occasionally they interchanged among them. I am afraid the picture is only too accurate of all the gray heads and gray beards since the world began. They are, in reality, scolding the times for the loss of their own youth. Ah, well! "Old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine," are best for old people who have not the spring and power of adaptation to conform themselves to new; but, to those few whose imaginations are still aflame, and whose hearts are still in touch with young life, the promise of the future spreads out fair,



BOTH WIN

I'D been thinking for weeks of some way to propose,
And no phrase could I frame, though I wooed her by looks;
For it's hard to make love to, as every one knows,
The talented author of two or three books.

But it chanced that, one day, she was talking of fame,
Of her work with the pen, and confessed the design
Of her girlhood's career was—to win her a name.
So, she couldn't say "No," when I offered her mine!

ROY FARRELL GREENE.

June 1903

A SONG OF SEASONS

I SAW her first one fair Spring day,
 And she was like the Spring,
 With all the joyousness of May,
 When earth and heaven sing.
 And there and then within my heart
 Love grew exceedingly;
 She, Love and I, we walked apart—
 Oh, Love was sweet to me!

I saw her in the Summer, too—
 Oh, Love was sweet to me!
 And Love like Summer softly grew,
 Languorous, flowery.
 Love breathed a wondrous perfumed air,
 And sang a passionate tune;
 And, oh, my joy was sweet and rare—
 Oh, rare and sweet as June!

Alas, alas, when Autumn came,
 And leaf and flower faded,
 Love faded, too, oh, quite the same;
 Yea, Love grew old and jaded.
 And, when the Winter's winding-sheet
 Of snow lay still and white,
 Love, too, was buried, as was meet,
 For Love was dead—oh, quite!

But, surely Spring will come again,
 The happy, budding Spring,
 When earth forgets its Winter pain
 When all the joy-bells ring.
 Then Love will rise again to life,
 With red, red blood a-swirl;
 And he will take my hand and lead
 Me to another girl!

CARLETON STUART.



IN THE SUMMER-TIME

HE—What did you think when I first made love to you?
 SHE—I was afraid you were in earnest.



“IT’S hard to lose one’s relatives,” said the poor man, insinuatingly.
 “Hard?” growled the millionaire. “Why, it’s almost impossible!”

A PLATONIC ELOPEMENT

By Richard D. Ware

THE two sturdy, mountain-bred horses were carrying along, at a swinging trot, the heavy wagon with its eight passengers. Another wagon, loaded with a small Cheops of trunks, followed close behind them, its horses apparently quite ready to try conclusions with the pair in front, if circumstances and their driver permitted.

About three hours before this, the drivers had found some difficulty in keeping the horses quiet, while they had been waiting in front of the pretty log camp which the travelers had turned over to the squirrels until another Summer should come.

One of the drivers had remarked, "The horses are feelin' pretty good this evenin', Si;" to which his companion had replied, "So they be, Will'um, and a good thing, too, considerin'; but I guess we can make it. Whoa up, there!"

The young people had decided to enjoy the whole of that last day at the camp, and drive out in the evening to the village where they were to take the train a little after ten o'clock. The moon was to be full that night, and the programme seemed, in anticipation, to be a glorious finish to the pleasure of the house-party. Silas Upham, master of the horse and general traffic-manager of the settlement down the lake, had been consulted, and had "lowed as how they could do it if they got started right;" so, the matter was settled.

Silas and his factotum, William Higgins, duly appeared with the wagons in the little clearing in front of the camp at the appointed time.

The four guides made their embarrassed adieus, and started down the lake in their canoes. The men in the party brought out the trunks, and stowed them in the baggage-wagon. Two pretty girls climbed into their seats in the other wagon, and settled themselves among the fishing-rods and gun-cases. The hostess took a final look about the big living-room and at the shuttered windows, before turning the key in the heavy storm-door. The men stood near her on the piazza. Every one seemed to be waiting for something to happen next, but nothing did. Silas examined his silver time-piece. The hostess said something, and one of the men looked at his watch, and answered her.

"She will be ready in a minute," said the hostess. "You mustn't be hard on her, Jack, though I will admit she is aggravating at times. I was not at all sure how she would fit in at the camp when I asked her to come. She has always had her own maid, and isn't used to waiting on herself. I will go in and see if I can hurry things."

"Waiting on herself!" repeated the man to his two friends; "I should say not. Every one has to wait on her and for her, for that matter. What she needs is discipline."

"Why don't you give it to her, Pemberton?" asked one of the other men, with a laugh.

"Oh, Jack!" called the girl in brown, from the wagon.

"I've troubles of my own," said Pemberton, as he went down the steps.

The other two men lighted cigarettes, and sat on the railing of the piazza.

looking out at the lake. Silas took another observation, and turned in his seat, impatiently. "You better go 'long with the trunks, Will'um—no, darn it, it's one of 'em we're waitin' for," he exclaimed. The sun was almost out of sight below the hills across the lake, and both drivers were getting decidedly uneasy.

Finally, the hostess appeared on the threshold with a look of relief on her pleasant face.

"Her trunk is ready to be strapped. Will you look after it and her other things?" she said. The three men rushed across the piazza just as a tall, graceful girl came out of the door.

"My luggage is in my room. It's so good of you to trouble," she said, with a gracious smile as they passed her. She was daintily dressed in a dark-blue foulard costume and a hat with Paris and a bewildering variety of veils all over it. A light, fluffy boa added a final touch to the picture framed in the rough logs of the doorway, as she stood there buttoning a long, white glove, and looking out at the sunset.

She turned with a quick smile to the hostess, who was nervously swinging her bunch of keys on its red tape, waiting until she should be able to shut and lock the door of the camp.

"It seems a pity to leave this, doesn't it?" she said.

"We ought to have left it just half-an-hour ago, my dear," answered the hostess.

The men appeared at the door with a gigantic structure which they finally succeeded in landing safely in the baggage-wagon. A second trip brought forth an assortment of bags, parasols and lesser impedimenta, which was stowed beneath the seats of the other wagon. Pemberton stood by the wheels while the other two men clambered in. The girl on the piazza smiled down at them, gathered her frills up over her high-heeled shoes and silken ankles, and started down the steps.

"Will you have the box-seat, Miss

Verney?" asked Pemberton. "I think you said you never sit anywhere else."

"Oh, but that is on a coach," she answered. "This is so different, you know, Mr. Pemberton. One might just as well have it, too. If you say that is the only place you care to sit, they always ask you to. I remember we were going to the Bois one afternoon——"

"Mildred, my dear, please remember that we have twenty-two miles of '*bois*' to go through to-night, and get in where you wish to," said the hostess.

"Was I keeping you waiting, really? Oh, then I'll sit with Miss Harding. It looks like the most comfortable place, don't you think so, Mr. Pemberton?"

"I thought it would be," said Pemberton, with a look at the girl in brown. He climbed into the front seat with Silas as the latter turned the horses.

Miss Verney settled herself between her companions, ready to enjoy the anticipated pleasures of the drive.

"I do hope we won't have to hurry. It is a perfect night to drive," she said, gathering in the flying ends of the fluffy boa.

"I guess there ain't much use in hurryin' now, but I guess we will just the same. Will'um, you keep them hosses' noses over my tailboard, or you'll hear from me. Gedap!" said Silas.

The road leading from the clearing was over low land, and was chiefly corduroy, but Silas put the horses at it through the gathering darkness with apparent disregard of possible results, and they took it like steeple-chasers. It is not beyond suspicion that Mr. Upham was letting off steam a little in this first mad dash, as a reaction from his period of waiting, and squaring accounts with one of his passengers, according to his own peculiar methods, at the same time, even though the just must suffer with the unjust. The girl in brown was bouncing merrily about, and rather

enjoying the excitement of it. Pemberton looked back at her occasionally, to see that all was well at her end of the seat. She came down from a particularly lofty bump as the wagon cleared a bridged drainage ditch across the road. She laughed softly to herself, and turned to her neighbor, who was just then clutching at her straining boa with one hand, and pushing her hat back from over her eyes with the other.

"Does this remind you of the Bois, Miss Verney? Bois means woods, doesn't it? These are certainly woods."

"The Bois—like this! Good heavens—no!"

Her answer was somewhat disconnected, for her mind was on other things.

"I never felt—anything like this—in my life. Do you call—this a—a road?"

Silas gave the off horse a touch with the whip, and turned half around in his seat.

"Call it a road? I guess we do call it a road, and the best two miles——"

"Two miles," groaned the girl as the boa escaped her again.

"The best two miles o' corderoy in the township. I oughter know, for I put it in. Road, I guess it's a road," he continued. Miss Verney had not added to her popularity with Mr. Upham by her comment. He had fought to get the road through, and he had fought to get his money for it in town-meeting, when his bill had received caustic comments from those of a different political faith from his own. That particular road had been the way to the light of Mr. Upham's friendly regard, or to the outer darkness of his wrath, in those stirring times.

He turned to his horses, and the wagon bounced along in silence. The horses careered over a loose-planked bridge, and struck the flat again with a mighty jolt. The Paris hat nearly came to an untimely end. It dragged its moorings, and fell in the lap of the girl in brown. A dozen peculiarly feminine temptations assailed her soul,

urging her to let it continue on its way to destruction; but she resisted them, and handed the hat back to its owner.

"Driver—driver!" Miss Verney gasped, "you must not drive like this! I can't—stand it!"

That was the last straw. It was "Mr. Upham" to most, "Silas," or even "Si" to some, but "driver," never. He made no change in his methods and no reply, beyond remarking, gruffly, "There's the end on't beyond them pines."

At the pine grove, they came into the main road. The horses were brought to a walk, in order to allow the baggage-wagon to catch up. The passengers settled themselves in less strained positions after their wild ride, and the men lighted their pipes.

One of the horses on the baggage-wagon was a little wind-broken, and as it walked along after its recent exertions the infirmity was quite noticeable. Silas heard the sound, and turned to Pemberton.

"Good-natured hoss, that off one back there," he commented.

"Good-natured? How do you mean, Si?" asked Pemberton.

"Why, don't you hear him whistlin'? The harder you work that hoss the more he whistles. Ain't many folks like that. G'long!" said Mr. Upham.

This unbending of his injured dignity seemed to dissipate his vapors. He settled to his work, and sent the pair along as only the practised driver can, saving his reserve for any emergency, yet bringing into play every ounce of its normal power.

The moon had risen, and was shining through the woods, casting fantastic shadows of the swaying branches on the whitened road. Here and there, they passed through clearings by the roadside where they could see the moon in its full glory, unobstructed by the trees, as it rolled up through the clear, cloudless sky. The stars added to the brilliancy of the night, and, now and then, a faint crimson glow of the aurora went across the northern heavens. Except for the

crickets and the sound of the horses' feet, everything was still. Occasionally, as they passed some clearing, a lamp would be held at a window in the settler's half-finished frame house, and a face would peer out at the unusual passers-by. It was one of those Autumn nights when one is glad to be alive, and the red blood tingles with the joy of it.

There was little conversation, except for an occasional remark between Pemberton and Silas on the front seat. Either the difficulties which had attended such efforts at the beginning of the drive had proved too great for further attempts, or the spirit of the night had thrown its spell of silence over them all. As they came to the top of a long hill, which the horses had gallantly breasted at a gallop, they could see, down in the valley that stretched away before them, a few faint lights showing where the village nestled in among the hills.

The hostess leaned forward. "Do you think we have plenty of time, Mr. Upham?" she said.

Silas turned the face of his mighty time-piece into the moonlight. "No, marm, we hain't," he replied, as he returned it to its resting-place.

"I simply must be in town in the morning," said one of the men. "My partner has planned to start on his vacation to-morrow, and he will be wild if I don't turn up."

"Father wrote that he would stay in town to-night, and meet me in the morning. He won't know what to think," joined in the girl on the seat with the hostess.

"It is very upsetting, and I'm very sorry," said the hostess. "We shall all have to go to the hotel, and take the morning train. That's the best we can do."

"Well, you must not worry about me, Mrs. Curtis," said Alice Harding, turning back. "I think it would be great fun. I'm half-starved, for one thing, and I would love to see dear old Mrs. Brent again. How would you like one of those doughnuts of

hers, Jack?" she asked, leaning over to Pemberton; "one of those long, twisted ones, right now?"

"A nut of dough, a jug of milk, and thou beside me singing in the wilderness—" he began, in tones of inspiration. The girl laughed at his nonsense, and he broke off to speak to the hostess.

"Really, Mrs. Curtis, it won't make much difference. Fred can telegraph to Horton, and it's more than probable that Mr. Ellis is staying at the club to-night, so Margaret can wire him there. We get in early in the afternoon, you know."

"It makes it most inconvenient for me," said Mildred Verney. "I shall have to take the three-o'clock train instead of the limited. I don't see why the driver could not have come sooner. And my trunk was ready quite a little time before Mr. Pemberton came up for it."

Alice Harding gave a little gasp, but subsided. Pemberton turned quickly, started to say something he apparently discovered was not going to sound well, and became silent again.

Silas Upham felt his natural sense of justice dilating within him. No social conventionalities or sex distinctions hampered his rugged soul, and he believed that the white light of truth should shine untinged by more roseate hues, no matter upon whom its rays should fall. Unwarranted aspersions had been cast on him and on his friend, the "likely young feller" by his side. The spirit of his free-speaking New England ancestors grew strong, and he turned in his place and spoke.

"Mis' Curtis," he said, "you as't me if we had plenty of time, an' I said we hain't, and no more we hain't. It's close figgerin', but I'll get that train if nothin' breaks. I never lost a train for your folks yet, and I ain't goin' to begin now. An' I'll say fu'ther that we'd ha' been there now if this young woman had got her Saratogy packed like Alice here, or like any cap'ble young woman would ha' done, and not kep' us all waitin'.

just thirty-two minutes by my watch. She ain't been brought up right."

Having delivered this Rhadamanthine decree, Mr. Upham turned to his horses.

"Why, Mrs. Curtis!" cried the girl, "that man hasn't any right to say——"

"Mildred, my dear," interrupted the hostess, with a touch of firmness, "as you have raised the question, it is only fair that it should be answered. You ought to have been ready, and you may have put us all to a great deal of inconvenience."

"But you know I am not used to doing such things, and you told me there would be no room for Marie," answered the girl.

"Let's not discuss it, Mildred. Perhaps, things will turn out all right, after all; and, if they don't, we shall have to make the best of it. The hotel is very attractive and comfortable. Do the best you can for us, Mr. Upham," she added.

A long whistle, quickly followed by three shorter ones, echoed among the hills.

"By Hoke, there she is!" exclaimed Mr. Upham.

They could see a long line of curling white smoke swiftly approaching down the valley, drifting low in the moonlight over the tops of the trees.

"Can we do it?" asked Pemberton.

"Yep," said Upham, releasing the brake with a jerk. "It's four miles from that cut she just went into, to the tank. Takes her five or six minutes for water, and she comes up slow. We can do it. There won't be no time to 'tend to all them trunks, though."

"That's all right. Mrs. Curtis, Silas says we can catch the train, but we'll have to leave the trunks. I would just as soon stay over, and I will bring them along to-morrow," said Pemberton.

The hostess gave a sigh of relief.

"It's awfully good of you, Jack, but it doesn't seem quite fair to put you to all that trouble," she answered.

"But I must have my trunk!" cried Miss Verney.

"It is impossible," said the older woman, with decision. "Mr. Pemberton is doing all that can be done. It is quite like him," she added, with a grateful smile toward the front seat.

"Then that is settled. Now, Si, for a Garrison finish!" said Pemberton.

As they came on to the level valley road at the foot of the hill, Silas called up his reserves, and the drive became a runaway under perfect control. He took some chances, but he took them well, and won. A whistle sounded, and they could hear the measured puffing of the heavy engine.

"She's left the tank," said Silas, and reminded the off horse that time was pressing.

As they dashed up to the platform, the blinding glare of the headlight appeared from behind the little station. The conductor and several brakemen swung down from the steps of the cars. A man in the mail-car tossed a mail-bag into the waiting embrace of the station-agent, and the train came to a full stop just as Silas pulled up the panting horses, and threw on his brake.

"Dead beat," he remarked, as he twisted the reins around the whip.

Pemberton was on the platform in a second, and rushed up to the conductor.

"How long are you to be here?" he asked.

"No longer than I can help; about a minute and a half," was the answer. "We're late now."

Will'um had arrived at the moment with the baggage, and was unloading like a longshoreman.

"How about those trunks?"

"Sorry, sir, but we can't wait for them. They will come on the first train in the morning," said the conductor. "I will ask you to get on board, ladies."

The other members of the party had gathered around, listening to their fate.

Mildred Verney was not reconciled to hers. "It is outrageous! I must

have it!" she exclaimed, and turned from the group, running back to the pile of trunks which covered the rear of the platform, just as Mrs. Curtis led the way into the Pullman. In a moment, the girl in brown and the hostess came out again to the platform of the car with Pemberton, who had carried in their various belongings. The conductor was swinging his lantern, and the train started as Pemberton dropped to the platform.

"It's too bad, Jack! It's dear of him, isn't it?" she said, turning to the young girl beside her.

"It's all right, Mrs. Curtis. Glad to do something for the good time we've had. Good-bye!"

Pemberton stood watching the long train roll by, gathering more and more speed as it swept along, until the last car had passed him. As he turned, he saw a figure rushing wildly toward him through the darkness, followed by a man.

"Hi, there, don't you see you can't catch it!" shouted the man, and Pemberton recognized Silas Upham's voice. The woman he was pursuing caught her foot on a loose plank in the platform, stumbled, and was on the point of falling, when Pemberton leaped forward and caught her. She clung to him, with her arms around his shoulders, while she regained her balance. She was completely out of breath, and unable to speak for the moment; but he needed no words to tell him that the girl in his arms was Mildred Verney.

Silas came up, breathing hard, and cast an appreciative glance at the attitude of the two.

"By Hoke," said he, "you give me a start! I thought you was goin' right under the wheels, sure. Don't you know they keep them vestibule doors locked?"

The girl made no response, but released her grasp on Pemberton as if she had but just become conscious of her position. She pushed back the veil which had fallen over her face, and the two men could see she was thinking, intently.

Suddenly, she turned to Pemberton. "We will go to the Episcopal minister's at once," she said.

"Hey!" ejaculated Mr. Upham.

"We are going to the hotel," replied Pemberton. "We can put our traps back in the wagon, and Silas will drive us up."

"Certainly," said Mr. Upham.

"Mr. Pemberton, I have always understood you were an honorable man, and I ask you to take me to the Episcopal minister's," she answered, drawing up her slender figure to its full height.

Mr. Upham gazed at them for a moment. The station-lamps showed the dawning of sudden inspiration upon his countenance. His mouth slowly opened, and he threw back his head in silent ecstasy. Then, he bent over nearly double, and slapped his sturdy thigh with a peal of delight.

"Well, if you two ain't the slickest I ever see!"

They looked at him in amazement.

"If ever I see the like! You had me fooled, I'll own up to that. I don't believe any of the rest caught on, either. 'Fraid we'd lose the train!" ejaculated Mr. Upham, when his eruptions of mirth permitted him to speak at all. "I take back what I said about your bringin' up," he continued, turning to the puzzled girl; "you're all right. But say, I thought you was keepin' comp'ny with the other one," he added, turning to Pemberton. Mildred flushed to her ears as the situation dawned on her.

"Great heavens!" exclaimed Pemberton, under his breath, while Silas genially pounded him on the back, and again proclaimed that it was the slickest thing he had ever seen.

Suddenly, Silas became serious again. "Of course, you're goin' to take her to the minister's, John, and you hadn't oughter waited for the gal to ask you to, either," he said, putting his hand on the young man's shoulder. "You've got to do the square thing by her now, and the hotel'll come well enough, next. I ain't goin' to have the slickest thing

I ever did see sp'iled, and you two young folks doin' things you'll be sorry for, not if I know it. Pile in there, miss," he said, turning to Mildred, "and we'll be at the minister's in three minutes. I'll drive easy this time, too," he added, with a reminiscent, but friendly, grin.

This was too much. She turned to Pemberton, and threw out her hands, beseechingly.

"Mr. Pemberton, I beg of you——"

"Don't you worry; he'll come," said Silas, confidently.

"Silas Upham," said Pemberton, with emphasis, "don't you be more than half-a-dozen kinds of an idiot at once. We have not eloped, and we have no intention of eloping."

"Sho, now!" said Silas, apparently much disappointed.

"I stayed behind to look after the trunks," he continued, "and Miss Verney has lost the train for some reason I don't know. She apparently prefers to spend the night at the minister's if she can, rather than at the hotel, for reasons which I imagine I do know. Now, you know the whole story, and, if you will drive us to Mr. Holbrook's, I shall be much obliged to you."

Silas saw his thunder for the next evening around the stove at the village store being stolen from him, but he took it with resignation.

"Course I'll drive you. But say, John," he added, confidentially, "that would have been the slickest thing if you had done it." Then, "Ready, miss," he said, preparing to help Miss Verney into the wagon.

Mr. Upham's recent suggestions in regard to the ride were too strongly before her mind.

"I prefer to walk," she said, without looking at him.

"Oh, come, miss, no hard feelin's," he answered, really disturbed by her attitude. "There's no fool like an old fool, and that's me, all right."

"I prefer to walk," she said again, and turned away.

"That's all, Silas; Miss Verney prefers to walk. I can manage the bags.

I'll see you at the station in the morning. Good night!"

"Certainly," replied Silas, as he climbed into his seat. "You know the house—second one beyond the church."

"I can find it. Good night," said Pemberton; and Mr. Upham loosened his brake, and turned the horses out into the darkness.

"Do you want to telegraph any one?" asked Pemberton. The girl shook her head.

"Shall we start, then?" He took up the two traveling-bags, and she gathered up her trailing skirts.

"Be careful of the step; my hands are rather full to help you," he said.

The station was on the outskirts of the village, and they walked down the lonely road in silence. The few remarks which Pemberton had ventured, in the hope of making his companion take a less tragic view of their recent experiences, had met with little response, and he had given it up.

Two somewhat belated young people were sitting in the shadow of an overhanging apple-tree on the stone wall which ran along the road. The young man seemed to be doing his best to prevent the girl from falling from her perch, if his strong right arm could save her.

Pemberton noticed the couple, and the contrast between the youth's occupation and his own appealed to his sense of humor.

"More like the real thing, isn't it?" he observed.

"You are unbearable!" was the girl's only reply.

Pemberton changed the bags about, and swallowed his rebuke, philosophically. He had decided to take things as they came that night.

"This is right for the minister's—Dr. Holbrook's house, isn't it?" he called to the young man on the stone wall.

"Huh?" said the young man, without relaxing his gallant efforts.

The girl beside him sat up. "They're goin' to be married," she whispered, in tones which reached the travelers in the road.

"We want to find Dr. Holbrook's," repeated Pemberton, waiving the suggestion.

"Oh, second house beyond that church," answered the young man on the wall, pointing down the road with his disengaged hand.

"Thanks," said Pemberton.

The girl on the wall relapsed to her former position, and, as the two wanderers went down the road, they could hear the man's muffled laughter and the girl's responsive giggle in close harmony, under the apple-tree.

They soon came to the house. No lights could be seen in any of the windows.

"I think every one must have gone to bed," said Pemberton, raising the latch of the gate to the little garden.

"They will have to get up, then," she replied, shortly, as she passed him. She pulled the door-bell, and they could hear an answering jangle in the rear part of the house. No one appeared, and she rang again, this time with more success. A window opened directly over them, and an elderly woman put her head out. She saw the girl at the door, and Pemberton standing behind her with the traveling-bags.

"The minister can't marry you to-night," she said; "you will have to wait and come around in the morning."

Pemberton hardly looked the part of the disappointed bridegroom at the tidings. The woman in the window was drawing in her head, regarding the question as settled.

"Wait!" cried the girl. "I don't want to be married! I never want to be married"—the late occurrences had made her a little hysterical—"but I want to see the minister. It is of the greatest importance."

The head in the window withdrew, and the murmur of conversation in the room overhead reached them. The head reappeared.

"He will be down in a minute," said the woman, and shut the window.

A faint light finally appeared through the glass around the casing of the front door, growing brighter as

it came down the stairs into the hall. There was the snap of a lock, the rattle of a chain, and the door opened. A tall, gray-haired man, clad in a dressing-gown, with a blanket thrown in patriarchal folds around his shoulders, stood within, shielding with one hand the flame of a kerosene lamp which flared in the draught of the open door.

He looked at the two young people with kindly, inquiring eyes.

"Come in," he said.

Pemberton followed the girl into the house, and deposited the bags on the floor, awaiting further developments.

"I am sorry I cannot ask you into my study," continued the minister, "but some relatives are staying with us, and it is doing duty as a nursery, temporarily. I understand from my wife that you do not wish to be married—I believe the young lady wishes never to be married," he added, with a slight smile, "so, perhaps, we can talk just as well here." He placed the lamp on the stairway, and turned inquiringly to Pemberton.

"I think Miss Verney will explain better than I can," said Pemberton. "I fear you don't remember me from last Summer, Dr. Holbrook. I am John Pemberton. I'll venture to say, though, that you haven't forgotten that three-pounder in the Upper Hole."

"Indeed, I have not, nor you, either," was the warm response. "You must forgive my old eyes. I tremble to think of what might have happened but for you and your landing-net. You must not be shocked," he added, turning to the girl, "but we fishers of men have to keep our hands in a little in our vacations. What is there that I can do for you?"

The girl poured forth her story. The minister listened attentively, gravely nodding his head from time to time as the tale unfolded, though a humorous gleam had appeared in his calm eyes.

"I am here to ask you to take me, as a member of your church, under your protection for the night," she concluded.

The minister thought a moment. "From what I know of Mr. Pemberton, I can hardly imagine your having a better protector than he would be," he said, gravely. "It seems to me that the best thing to do would be to let him take you to the hotel. It is a charming old place. Mrs. Brent is a motherly soul, and she will have you under her wing in five minutes."

"I suggested that," said Pemberton.

"I have come to you," persisted the girl.

"Yes, and under ordinary circumstances it would give Mrs. Holbrook and myself much pleasure to receive you as our guest, but it seems impossible to-night. You see, our house is small, and our visitors completely fill it. I assure you I have considered this, carefully."

"I can go in your study," said the girl, stubbornly.

"I think I mentioned that my two little grandchildren are occupying it," replied the minister, quietly.

"It looks like the hotel, Miss Verney," ventured Pemberton. "Dr. Holbrook would take you in if he possibly could, I know."

"At this time of night—alone with you," she exclaimed, "I should be absolutely compromised!"

Pemberton flushed through his tan, and his eyes flashed, but he said nothing.

The minister looked at the girl intently for a moment, before speaking.

"My dear young lady," he said, "I do not regard my duty toward a member of my church as being any different from my duty to any other fellow man or woman in misfortune or embarrassment. There is nothing of either in the present situation. This is New England, not the old, and Mr. Pemberton is an American gentleman. You seem to have some mistaken ideas, my child, for it has been my experience that no one need fear being misunderstood, or 'compromised,' as you put it, when the conscience is clear. In the name of the Church," he continued, with gentle dignity,

"you have demanded as your right what it would have been our pleasure to give you if it were possible." His voice grew more stern. "By making your demand, you have recognized me as your superior in our church, and I am entitled to your obedience."

The girl's eyes fell, and she bowed her head.

He paused a moment. "As your superior, I command you to go with this gentleman, and rely upon his service. He will be answerable to me."

The girl stood a moment with downcast eyes, and then turned toward the door.

Pemberton took up the bags.

"Good night, Mr. Pemberton," said the minister, as he opened the door.

"My child," he added, turning to the girl, "you must not think I am turning you from my door. I am only turning you toward a better and happier knowledge. This has been a little sermon, all for you. See if you do not find the text when you think of it, to-morrow. Good night."

He stood in the door, holding the lamp until the gate closed behind the pair.

"Good night," he said again.

The girl made no response, and the light disappeared behind the closed door.

It was only a short distance to the hotel, a quaint, rambling structure opposite the green of the village square, with its flagstaff and the simple granite monument telling of the village boys who had died that the flag might still wave there.

At a distance, the windows seemed dark, but, as the two drew nearer, Pemberton could see lights glimmering through the curtains on the lower floor, and his heart was glad.

"They are evidently still up," he remarked.

The swinging sign-board over the porch squeaked a greeting as they came up the walk. Pemberton raised the heavy brass knocker, and it had hardly fallen before the door was thrown open, and a bright-faced,

motherly-looking woman appeared, beaming welcome upon them.

"Well, for the land sakes, where have you two been! Silas Upham drove up here, and said he thought you'd probably be 'round soon, but that you was goin' to call at the minister's first."

The possible results of such a visit seemed to occur to her for the first time, and she beamed more benignly still.

"Goodness, gracious, me, you don't mean to say that you've gone and got mar——?"

"Again!" groaned Mildred.

"My dear Mrs. Brent, I don't mean to say anything of the sort," interrupted Pemberton. "I was going to stay over, anyway, and Miss Verney lost the train. She wanted to see Dr. Holbrook, who is a friend of her father's, and he says that you are to take good care of her."

"Oh, that was it, was it!" said Mrs. Brent. "Look after her—of course I will. I've had a fire goin' in the General Stark room right next mine, ever since I heard you was comin', and it's all ready for her. You are to have your old one. You go right in the little parlor, and take off your things, my dear. I want to let Maria J. know you've come. You must be nearly starved, both of you." She bustled through a door, leaving the two alone.

"This looks more promising," said Pemberton.

Mildred smiled slightly, and went into the cozy little room. Mrs. Brent soon came hurrying back.

"I'm not goin' to have you eat in the dinin'-room. It's all of a chill since supper," she declared. "Maria J. will bring your supper in here, Mr. Pemberton, and I'm goin' to take her right up to her room, and bring hers up to her, myself. You must be tired to death, you poor child—and there's some times we don't want men folks botherin' 'round, anyway, do we? Is that your bag? Let me take it."

"I will take it up, Mrs. Brent," volunteered Pemberton.

"No, you set right there. Maria J. 'll be in in a minute."

She took the bag in one hand, and put the other over the girl's shoulder. The good minister had been right. The girl was under her wing for the time.

They went out into the hall, and Pemberton followed them to the foot of the broad staircase, up which Mrs. Brent trotted, clutching her ample skirts in one hand. Mildred paused on the first step, and turned, holding out her hand to Pemberton with a frank smile. He took the offered hand, and looked up at her.

"I want to thank you for *all* you have done for me to-night," she said; "I was very foolish."

He smiled up at her, and his strong clasp tightened on her fingers.

"To be honest, I am a little afraid you were," he said.



THE TRUANT

O MOONBEAM, tell me, have you seen,
Upon your ghostly way,
Perchance, a little flower o' dream,
That I lost yesterday?

"Aye, I have seen your treasure, child,
And safe from harm it lies.
I met young Love within the wood,
Your dream-flower in his eyes!"

CHARLOTTE BECKER.

THE MOCKERY OF IT

By Zoe Anderson-Norris

PARIS was Mardi-Gras mad. The boulevards swarmed with humanity. They were strewn knee-deep with confetti. The bare branches of the trees lining the sidewalks, hung serpentine-decked and rainbow-like, brilliant with coloring, red, yellow, blue and green. Carriages, cabs and omnibuses halted midway on their route, unable to move for the crowd, the large, white horses gazing surprised upon the painted harlequins who blocked their pathway.

Above, from balconies, women flung confetti upon the heads of those below, while, higher yet, advertisements in electrics traced themselves slowly and delicately in letters of fire, then went out again. It was as if a giant hand had written, then rubbed them out.

A rollicking fête it was, wild with hilarity, shrieking with shouts, maddening with the crush and cram and jumble through which those two walked silently, quietly, tranquilly, as though they walked through fragrant country-lanes, dew-bedizened, with only the stars above.

"So this is the last night?"—his voice trembled—"and to-morrow I go."

"To-morrow," she repeated, and sighed.

"But you will write to me? You will have a letter waiting for me when I get there?"

"Haven't we decided that it is best to forget?"

"It is you who have decided," said he. "As for me, well, perhaps it would be best; I don't know, perhaps it would. But how can I?"

After a time, he answered his own question.

"I cannot," he said.

Fingers tapped on her shoulder. She turned; a man in a mask dashed a handful of confetti in her face, and, laughing, fled. She buried her burning eyes in the sleeve of his coat. He pressed her head against his arm.

"There! there!" he said.

The boulevards were lined with mirrors. She stopped to look at her wet eyes, and to arrange her hair, tangled with confetti.

He, too, peered into the glass.

How tall he was, and fair and broad-shouldered and young! How young! She compared his face with hers. She shut her eyes. The difference hurt her. It was that, his youth, which was separating them.

"I am young," he had said once—that was at first—and, with those three words, he had put her off from him as with a strong arm.

Back of them, reflected in the mirror, thronged the dominoes, the harlequins, the clowns.

They mocked.

She turned away and sighed and took his arm again, leaning on him. With every breath she drew, she longed for the support of his youth, of his strength, she, who knew so well what it was to live alone and to lack support. By putting forth her hand, she could have it. She would not. If, at first, he had looked at her and said, "I am young," how would it be after?

Tears hung waiting to fling themselves all along that pathway. She knew as well as if she had walked there.

A woman grows old; but a man—a man!—he is young forever.

She could count the difference in their ages on the fingers of her two hands, and have fingers left over; but that difference—those years—formed a gulf deep, strong and swift to separate them, as the depth and strength and swiftness of the sea.

Two passing Frenchmen showered them with confetti.

He brushed it out of her eyes again and out of her hair, touching the collar of her coat with gentle fingers, and shaking out her sleeves.

"How am I to leave you?" he whispered, his lips close to her ear.

"I can't see; I have never been able to tell," she said, lightly, as if the thought of the coming separation were not weighing on her own heart like lead, "how you ever came to care for me at all; how did it happen?"

Drawing her hand through his arm, and holding it, he walked on.

"It is impossible to explain," he told her; "quite impossible. Ask any man who loves a woman, or any woman who loves a man, and you will have the same answer. It comes of itself; it is inexplicable."

Before them swarmed the maniac crowd, and back of them and at the sides of them. They passed cafés at whose little tables sat people in pairs, covering their chocolate with saucers, drinking their beer stealthily, covering it again, fearful of confetti and the contact of carnival fans. Near the sidewalks, dark-eyed lads sold packages of confetti from carts, bare-headed women cried confetti in the streets, and the two walked on through showers of confetti, silent once more, and sad.

"So, this is the last night with you." A long time afterward, he added: "I may never see you again." Shudderingly, he closed his hand over hers, lying on his sleeve. A gypsy girl, smilingly showing all her teeth, buried the two hands with confetti. She playfully tapped them with her carnival fan, and went on.

"Suppose," he panted, "that I should never see you again?"

"Listen!" She spoke very slowly and softly, for fear her voice might break. "What matter if you did not? Be patient. Life is made up of renunciation. Mine has been. It is there we find our strength."

They faced another mirror. Her eyes looked back at her, deep, dark, sad. They belied the courage of her words. Once, he had said to her: "You have the eyes of a child." Those eyes that stared hopelessly back at her were not the eyes of a child, they were the eyes of a woman who had lived and suffered, and who was tired now of living and suffering, dead tired.

She looked from them to him with a sudden rush of tenderness, biting her lip hard to keep back the words that fought for expression.

Life had taught her lessons.

"Some day," she faltered, by-and-bye, "when you have lived the years between, and I am young and beautiful again—perhaps, we shall meet."

"In another world, you mean? But I do not believe in that other world."

"Wait a while. It seldom comes to you, that belief, until you have lost all hope in this world."

"You sadden me!" he cried, impatiently. A clown caught up the words, and on they went, echoing down the boulevard, passed, mockingly, from mouth to mouth: "You sadden me! You sadden me!"

"Why should you lose hope?" he demanded.

Then, gently, as if he held out firm fingers to a child just beginning to totter, he said to her, "Come to me."

Her heart throbbed to suffocation. Her resolution wavered. Why not clasp those hands held out to her? Why not walk at his side? Where was the harm? Perhaps, before she grew too old, she might die. Then, she would have lived a little while at least. She would have been cared for, she would have been caressed. In the light of his love, she would have renewed her youth, wasted on that man who had married her, and who, happily, now was dead. Better that, a

short year or two of real life, than renunciation and an endless dragging on of dreary years without him.

Renunciation! She hated the word. She had had enough of it. It had been the password of her life. She flung it from her.

Here, within her reach, were light and life and love, waiting to be clasped and held. She would clasp and hold them.

She smiled up into his eyes. They widened with a sudden joy, his fine blue eyes, that had looked upon the world less long than hers, and were therefore glad. They beamed upon her. They read her thought.

A clown pushed his way through the crowd, and stopped before them. In his hand was a mirror, silver-mounted, glittering. His whitened fingers held the handle. With a sudden thrust he showed her her face, her eyes, her mouth, her cheek, her brow, those features of hers that she had scanned of late until she knew them by heart, every defect, every little wrinkle that had come to stay, every expression, every touch of sadness left by the insidious trail of those miserable years lived in between.

The clown looked and sneered. With a frightful grimace, holding the glass high, he showed her the face of the man at her side, young, fair, noble, unwrinkled; the face of a man who begins life, a clean, wide slate, upon which, as yet, there has been no writing, upon which there are no erasures. Then, the clown tore a jagged gash in the crowd, and disappeared.

She snatched her hand from the man's, and fell to moaning. She wrung

her hands together. A mob of maskers, seeing her separated from him, dragged her on, pelting her. She cowered and crouched, but they pelted her all the more. It was like the mockery of her life, through which—helpless under injustice, powerless, being a woman, to lift a finger in self-defense—she had cowered, even as she cowered now, beneath the furious pelting of confetti rained upon her in showering heaps, in rude handfuls heavily filled with dust.

He had followed her. In another moment, she was in his arms. He bore her to a side-street, where he released her and stood looking wistfully into her face.

"And you will not be mine?" he said. He would have drawn her toward him, but, rushing on, she walked swiftly through the dark streets homeward.

"Don't tempt me!" she begged, breathlessly; "don't tempt me!"

At the door, she pressed her trembling face against his shoulder. He raised her head.

"Let me look into your eyes, then," he whispered. "Open them, your beautiful eyes, and look at me out of them. I may never see them again."

He kissed her, he clasped her close once, and left her.

In her room, she stood before her mirror.

The confetti clung to her clothing. It embedded itself in her hair, her hat, her sleeves, her skirts, her gloves.

She shook it off.

It fell away in glowing masses to her feet; and with it fell her youth, her joy of life, her gladness and her last hope of love and happiness.



IN CHICAGO

SHE—I'm afraid I can't marry you.
HE—Oh, just this once!



THE longer you keep liquor, the better it is—for you.

RECOMPENSE

FOR love of him, she shut within her eyes
 Hot tears and terrible; and set a smile
 Fast on her lips, that they might so beguile
 His own to smiling in their olden wise.

For love of him, she made her laughter ring
 Above the sorrow choking in her throat,
 Praying the poor, forced gladness of its note
 Might ease a little space his sorrowing.

Was it a little thing that, for his sake,
 She masked herself with mirth, lest he might guess;
 And hid her heart, from very tenderness,
 Lest at the sight of it his own might break?

And her reward? But this—to watch him where
 He whispers one who hides no grief for love:
 “Give me your pity and the tears thereof,
 Since she, who might have helped me, does not care!”

THEODOSIA GARRISON.



“BUT YET A WOMAN”

“JOHN,” she said, as they strolled through the brilliantly lighted rooms of the Casino, “Monte Carlo isn’t at all as I had imagined it. Every one of these people we see gambling seems so nice and respectable! Now, dear, do you think it would be very wicked if I bet just once?”

“Of course not, love; and, even if you lose, it won’t cripple us financially. Here’s a louis. Play that, and see what luck you have. You know, if one bets on one’s age, they say one is apt to win.”

There is a moment of deep thought. Then, with a smile of gladness, the tiny piece of gold is placed on figure 24.

The wheel spins, and the discontented little piece of marble, after dancing all about, finally drops with a click into—28.

“There!” cries the excited John; “if you had been honest you would have won.”

WALTER BURBANK.



QUERY, A. D. 2000

“WHAT was Mr. Benedict’s maiden name?”

VAN KIRK'S CRUSADE

By Cockburn Harvey

THERE was a unanimous expression of discontent from John Dugdale's immediate friends when he announced that he was about to marry some one up in the wilds of Connecticut. It was generally felt that this was not the kind of girl whom Dugdale should "tie himself to, for life." He was not the sort of fellow to be happy with a girl who would rhapsodize over a church fair, and lie awake at night anticipating the glories of the coming circus. But he, evidently, saw things from a different point of view.

"She is so devilish innocent, you know," he declared to Frank Van Kirk. "I feel as if my soul had had a clean shave after I have been with her!"

"Better leave her up there, then," said Van Kirk, pointing in what he believed to be the direction of Connecticut. "She'll be rather out of place, here; don't you think so? Besides, how about Mrs. Maitland?"

"Oh, she's all right. I've told her; and she said I was beginning to bore her, anyway!" Dugdale took a photograph from the mantelpiece, and examined it, critically. "She was a mighty good-looking woman when that was taken," he added.

"So Maitland thought, then, I suppose; eh?"

"Maitland's a drunken ass! No wonder his wife doesn't care for him." Dugdale bent the photograph double, disfiguring Mrs. Maitland's face with a crease straight across the nose.

"Now, look here, John," said Van Kirk; "you know just as well as I do why Maitland went to the devil! I am not going to moralize—for this humble

kettle recognizes its blackness—but—well. You've ruined Mrs. Maitland's picture, and you can't repair it, can you? How about her character; eh?"

He picked up his gloves and riding-whip, and turned toward the door.

"Don't imagine for a moment, though, that Mrs. Maitland will mutilate *your* photographs, for she won't! Going to ride?"

"No!" snarled Dugdale, shortly; "I'm going to Connecticut! I wish you wouldn't keep everlastingly reminding me of Jane Maitland. If she is willing to forget, and——"

"If!" said Van Kirk. "There are some things women never forget, and one of them is the romance of an illicit flirtation. You gave this woman her first taste of blood—look out for the animal, hereafter!" He held out his hand. "Don't get angry, old chap; I suppose I am a bit jealous at the idea of losing you; only, don't do anything in a hurry! Good-bye."

He shook Dugdale's rather limp hand, and gave him a little pat on the shoulder before he left him.

Dugdale stood for a while looking at the door; then, he threw Mrs. Maitland's photograph on top of the red coals, and ejaculated slowly and with emphasis, "Bosh!" A moment later, he ordered his hansom, and within two days Van Kirk received the following communication:

DEAR OLD FRANK:

I am the happiest man in the world. The little girl has consented to be married next Wednesday, and, of course, I want you to turn me off. We are going to have a real country wedding—very simple and ail that—no frills. I wish you would get a wedding-ring for me the size of the piece of string en-

closed. You might order a lot of flowers, and tell Tompkins to hurry up that frock-coat, and pick out something decent in the way of a diamond-and-pearl necklace for Kitty. She is a dear little thing, as innocent as a—oh, I forget what the thing is! By the way, get something for the bridesmaids, too, will you? There's a good chap. Have everything charged, of course. And tell Johnson I can't possibly play polo next week; I don't believe I shall ever play again. You ought to get married. I don't think of anything else. Oh, yes! go to Waffle's and order a lot of candies and cakes and things; and, perhaps, you ought to telegraph to Palm Beach for rooms.

Kitty wishes you to get some one to attend to the enclosed list. I told her you could do it, you have so much taste. It's only some gloves and ribbons and things of that kind. Come up on Tuesday, and breathe some decent air, morally and otherwise.

Yours,

JOHN.

Van Kirk read the foregoing at his club, the result being that he duplicated his usual wine order, and, after dinner, was fit for no God-fearing man's company. However, in due time, he attended to all the commissions; and, on Tuesday, with rage in his heart, and the wedding-ring in his pocket, cast a despairing look out of the car window as the train wound its way scraunchingly around a sharp curve into the terminus of Meadvale. Dugdale met him at the station, and shook his hand, violently.

"Bring the ring?" he inquired, eagerly.

"Oh, yes! I brought all the necessary paraphernalia for your execution," growled Van Kirk. The journey had been a tedious one, and his heart was at the polo-field at Cedarhurst.

"You don't mind riding up in the omnibus, do you?" said Dugdale. "Kitty's people don't keep horses, and there aren't any cabs here. Jolly place, don't you think so?"

"Considering that it's pitch dark, and that I have seen only the barn—I mean the station—so far, I am scarcely in a position to express an opinion." Then, seeing that Dugdale looked disappointed, he added, "I should think it would be a first-rate place to get married in!"

To this day, Van Kirk declares that

he feels the effects of the journey up in that omnibus.

"Not half a bad conveyance, is it, for a country place?" said Dugdale.

"Oh, Lord!" whispered Van Kirk to himself; "and this is the man who, three months ago, complained that my hansom jolted like a dray."

"Bully little inn!" declared Dugdale, as they rocked up to the door of the hotel. "I hope you had a good luncheon, as they dine here in the middle of the day. But they give you a good supper."

When Van Kirk reached his room, he stood for a few moments looking at himself in the libelous mirror.

"Fool! idiot! ass!" he cried, at length. "I'm aiding and abetting a crime, that's what I'm doing! The man's insane, crazy—as cracked as this damned glass! Lord! 'Bully little inn!' 'Not half a bad conveyance!' Suicide! And I'm helping my best friend to commit it!"

"Hurry up, old man!" shouted Dugdale, outside the door. "Come and get some supper, and then we'll go and see Kitty."

The memory of that supper still remains with Van Kirk, and yet he did not linger over it.

At the house of Kitty's parents, he was received with open arms as "John's friend." He quickly discovered that "John" was the bright, particular sun around which the household revolved. John monopolized Kitty, of course, and Van Kirk had rather a bad hour trying to dodge the leading questions with which the old people plied him.

"Look here," he said, explosively, to Dugdale, as they walked back to the hotel together, "what kind of parables have you been loading those innocent people up with? The old lady referred with feeling to your great interest in church matters!"

"Had to do it, Frank," declared Dugdale, easily. "They're nuts on the church racket. Besides, I do pay a deuce of a pew rent!"

"On the principle of giving unto the Lord, and lending your pew to the poor, I suppose, as you never occupy it!

The old gentleman wanted to know if I was employed in a store! I beseech you, have I the bearing of the noblemen who purvey silks and ribbons?"

"You certainly have not their polish, Van Kirk. Oh, if I should tell this at the club!"

Van Kirk walked along in silence for some minutes; then, giving himself a shake, he said, mournfully: "What time does the—the sacrifice take place?"

"Eleven-thirty, so that we can catch the one-thirty train. Hope it will be fine! Looks like it now; don't you think so? What do you think of her?"

"She's pretty, John, and I have no doubt that you will make her very happy."

"Yes, but didn't you notice how innocent she is?"

"I expect you to be idiotic at this time, and I am making every allowance, but please tell me how I am to answer such a question as that? Should I say 'yes,' you would naturally suppose, wouldn't you, that I have made some test? If I disagree with you, you won't be any better pleased. Therefore, for heaven's sake, be satisfied with my declaration that her external beauty is all right. God knows she ought to be innocent!"

"I know what's the matter with you, Van Kirk; you haven't had a drink since you arrived!"

"Do you suppose I am such an idiot as to take any chances on an expedition like this? I had two very comfortable ones before that—that meal, thank you."

"I was only going to remark," said John, rather apologetically, "that a small case, addressed to me, and labeled 'Apollinaris,' arrived on the same train with you."

"Then, your lady doesn't approve of that which cheers and inebriates?"

They were entering the hotel at this moment.

"One of the wiles of the devil," declared Dugdale, rather sententiously. "Great chap up here, the devil! He's a bird you want to look out for!"

"Perhaps, it is as well that Miss

Kitty is so well acquainted before going to New York!"

There is no record of the number of draughts that were quaffed from the case of Apollinaris that night; but the wedding was duly consummated the following day, and Van Kirk's speech was conceded to be the finest thing of its kind ever heard in Meadvale. Frank traveled with the bride and bridegroom as far as New York, where he saw them on the train for Florida. Mrs. Dugdale looked exceedingly well in her traveling gown, and she thanked Van Kirk very prettily for the part that he had taken in "making her perfectly happy."

"See you again in about two months," called out Dugdale, as the train was leaving the station.

Van Kirk stood for a moment, with his hat off, waving a feeble adieu; then, with a sigh, he made his way to his club. That evening, he betook himself to the Waldorf, where a sale of flowers, for the benefit of a charity, was going on. While he was sauntering about, desperately lonely without Dugdale, he felt a tap on his arm, and, turning, found himself face to face with Mrs. Maitland.

"Back so soon from Arcadia?" she said, smiling. "And how did the wedding go off?"

"Same as usual," replied Van Kirk. "All the old lies were repeated with the usual nonchalance, and the happy couple were the recipients of several dozen salt-cellers!"

"You're nervous, Mr. Van Kirk! Oh, I know it, because you're trying to be witty. Tell me something about the bride. Is she really pretty? And what kind of beauty—large, or small? I am quite interested, you know." She drew him into a little bower, and sat down.

"I cannot stay, because I have an appointment at the club; and, really, I think it would be better for you to form your own opinion of Mrs. Dugdale when she comes to New York." There was a little pause. Then, "She has a good deal to learn," he added.

"I intend to take her up!" declared

Mrs. Maitland, fidgeting with a bracelet. "This," she went on, snapping open what looked like a medallion, and disclosing a photograph of John Dugdale, "is the last thing he gave me!"

Van Kirk closed his hand over the bracelet. "You must give that to me, Mrs. Maitland," he said, sternly.

"Certainly not, Mr. Van Kirk. And I don't think it is quite proper for you to squeeze my hand so hard!" She laughed as he dropped her wrist suddenly.

"What are you going to do with it?" he said, presently. "I suppose you will return it to Dugdale."

"I might give it to Mrs. Dugdale as a wedding present, but I think I shall be selfish enough to keep it!" Then, as Van Kirk rose, "Must you go? Good night." She touched the tips of her fingers to her lips, and smiled as he bowed and left her.

Van Kirk pulled his mustache thoughtfully, and walked out of the Waldorf.

"That woman proposes to raise everlasting and uproarious Cain," he said. "She's going to take up Mrs. Dugdale! I should say that they would be about as congenial as—as Mr. and Mrs. Dugdale are!"

He went to his apartments, and sat for a long time looking into the fire. Then, he rang the bell, and, when his man came in, said, "Perkins, you'll have to pack all night, because we are going to England to-morrow." Later, he went to his desk, and wrote two letters. The first was addressed to Dugdale:

DEAR OLD JOHN:

I have decided to go to England to-morrow. I am lonely here without you, and I shall not come back until you send for me. My respects to Mrs. Dugdale. I should advise you to impress upon your wife the advantages of not having Mrs. Maitland's name on her visiting list.

Yours,

FRANK.

The second letter was to Mrs. Maitland.

MY DEAR MRS. MAITLAND:

I am leaving for England to-morrow, and wish to apologize for my rudeness this even-

ing. I am certain that Dugdale would blame me very much for my officiousness, and have no doubt that you and he will have many a laugh over the absurdity of his giving, and your receiving, such a present. You will scarcely recognize him, though; for, like all men who are in love for the first time, he is entirely changed. I roared over the stories he told, on the eve of his wedding, of some of his flirtations.

Yours sincerely,

F. VAN KIRK.

"There, my lady, if that doesn't make you feel as if you had a hole in your stocking, my name is not Van Kirk!"

While in England, Van Kirk received the following letters from John:

NEW YORK.

DEAR FRANK:

Here we are, back in New York, and Kitty takes to the life here like a young duck to the water; and, really, she has made quite an impression. Mrs. Maitland called as soon as she learned of our arrival, but I don't think Kitty was greatly impressed with her, and I don't fancy we shall see very much of her. I haven't been to the club once, and expect to sell my ponies. I hope you are having a good time. We are going to Newport in about a month. There is not a bit of news. Kitty joins me in all good wishes.

Yours,

JOHN.

NEWPORT.

DEAR FRANK:

Aren't you sick of London yet? I see you have been shining at Hurlingham. I have been knocking the ball about, just to keep myself in condition. Kitty and Mrs. Maitland have grown as thick as thieves. Do you remember Johnson? He's a goodish-looking chap, but an idiot. I spent three days in New York last week. There was hardly any one at the club, but I had a good time. When are you coming over?

Yours,

JOHN.

Van Kirk read this last letter over several times, with many shakes of the head. Three months later, Dugdale wrote again:

NEW YORK.

DEAR OLD FRANK:

Have you decided to spend the rest of your days in England? It is mighty slow here without you. Come home, and all will be forgiven, and I'll blow you off to an old-fashioned dinner at the club. I have been lugged around to functions until I am sick of them, and I have absolutely refused to budge any more. Johnson is a sort of steady

dish; he comes here all the time to meet Mrs. Maitland, and I don't think I ought to allow it! Kitty doesn't seem to see through it. I believe she thinks Johnson comes to see her. I'm off to the club now, to dine with Fairlie, who will pop off soon if he doesn't stop dallying with champagne; he is putting away about six bottles a day. Have the estimable Perkins set to work when you get this, and cable me when to order the dinner.

Yours,
JOHN.

Van Kirk whistled softly after he had read this. "He *has* sent for me!" he said; and then, while he was lying in bed thinking it over, he exclaimed: "Damn it all!" After which, he turned over and went to sleep.

The next day, he cabled to Dugdale, and within two weeks the friends were seated together in the club.

"Kitty's out, so I thought you would rather lunch here," said Dugdale. "Oh, by the way, I promised to take you to Mrs. Belford's affair to-night. Will you go?"

"Oh, yes," sighed Van Kirk; "I don't suppose my nautical roll will be noticeable after that crowd has supped!"

The Belford ball was calculated to outshine everything of its kind which had ever been attempted in New York. The *pièce de résistance* was a reproduction of a Japanese garden, in which were cunningly placed little nooks for those who wished to observe without being observed. Into one of these, Van Kirk led Kitty Dugdale.

"No use attempting to dance," he said. "Polo isn't in it with that scrimmage going on out there! How do you like matrimony, and New York, Mrs. Dugdale?"

Kitty laughed. "Both have their drawbacks, and—their compensations," she said, presently.

"I am glad to hear there are some compensations! What are they?"

"Oh, decent shops, and—" She spread out her hands toward the dancers—"this!"

As she extended her arms, Van Kirk started. "Who," he said, quickly, "gave you that bracelet?"

Kitty turned to him with an im-

petuous little gasp. "Wha—what right have *you* to ask?" she cried.

"None whatever," replied Van Kirk, easily; "but I think I have seen it before."

"Hardly, for Mrs. Maitland gave it to me only the other day."

"Ah!" said Van Kirk. He put his hand on the bracelet. "This little medallion used to open, if I am not mistaken."

Kitty drew her arm away, quickly. "No, no!" she cried, excitedly. "It is broken; it cannot be opened!"

"Kitty!" She looked at him in surprise. "Yes, *Kitty*!" went on Van Kirk, very soberly. "I want to be a great big brother to you, so I am going to begin by telling you that I am afraid you are not telling me the truth. Are you sure that Mrs. Maitland gave you that bracelet?"

Kitty raised her fan, and gave Van Kirk a sharp blow on the cheek. "That, Mr. Van Kirk," she said, "is the way I treat spies! Now, go back and talk it over with my husband! You need not bother to come with me; I see Captain Johnson coming for his dance." She sailed out of the nook, the picture of righteous indignation.

"So devilish innocent!" muttered Van Kirk.

He rose and went to the refreshment-room, where he took a large and potent drink; then, he sought Mrs. Maitland.

"So," said that lady, when he dropped into a chair beside her, "you decided at last to come back to us! There must, surely, have been some great attraction in London!"

"Fog!" declared Van Kirk, "and I seem to have brought some of it back with me."

"What do you mean?"

"I can't understand why you allowed Johnson to change John's picture for his before he gave that bracelet to Kitty!"

"He didn't change it, did he?"

"I am not quite sure about that," said Van Kirk, smiling, "but I know now what I have only suspected—

that Johnson *did* give Kitty the bracelet!"

"Well, suppose he did give it to her!"

"Ah! I shall have a nice long talk with Johnson. He will be amused at some of my stories. Men tell all sorts of things on their wedding eve! The best man is considered to be a species of father confessor! There is a funny little story in particular of the green plaid——"

"What do you want me to do?" broke in Mrs. Maitland, a nervous tremor in her voice.

"I want you to get hold of Kitty to-night, and point out to her that Johnson is your property, and that she is making a little fool of herself. I want you to tell her, gently, that the bracelet is yours—that Johnson had no right to give it to her. I shall attend to Johnson."

"Very well," sighed Mrs. Maitland. "And you won't tell Captain Johnson that—that funny little story?"

"I shall forget it, my dear Mrs. Maitland."

She held out her hand to him. "Frank!—I've never called you 'Frank' before, have I?—I believe I'll reform!"

"There is more joy in a certain place," murmured Van Kirk. "I expect to reform myself, some day, but I'll wait until the elation about you is over. Good night. I go to drink

your health, which I would not have done fifteen minutes ago!"

"It is lucky that she likes Johnson, though," confided Van Kirk to a brandy-and-soda, "or Kitty would have been in a scrape before she knew it." At which, the drink bubbled joyously.

"John," said Van Kirk, later, at the club, "I want you to invite me to luncheon at your house to-morrow!"

"Of course, old chap—" Dugdale yawned. "I am going home. I hope Kitty won't have that Maitland-Johnson gang there. I'm sleepy. By George! I'd like to go to Meadvale to rest for a while, but Kitty won't go."

"I don't believe the Maitland-Johnson gang will be there to-night," said Van Kirk.

"Have you changed your views at all about New York, and—the other thing, Mrs. Dugdale?" Van Kirk inquired, the next day, at luncheon.

"You ought to call me 'Kitty;' don't you think so, John? Yes; I'm sick of New York!"

"Then," suggested Van Kirk, smiling, "let's all go to Meadvale. 'Bully little inn'! eh, John?"

And, to the amazement of her husband, Kitty agreed.



A COLD FACT

THE CANNIBAL KING (*his teeth chattering*)—What was it you served with the last meal? I've had a prolonged chill ever since.

ROYAL COOK—That, sire, was a female missionary from Boston.



FORETHOUGHT

HUSBAND—You don't mean to say you paid two hundred and fifty for that gown?

WIFE—Oh, no! I left that for you to do.

PAULINE AND PEWTER

THROUGH cupboards of indulgent kin,
And chests in friendly attics,
She rummages from dawn till dusk,
The fairest of fanatics.
To-day, she's glee personified;
While, on a dark to-morrow,
Returning from a fruitless quest,
She pictures utter sorrow.
You ask what trials can so soon
From joy to grief transmute her—
Ah! woe is me, and woe again!
Pauline's collecting pewter.

She sees and sets her heart upon
A tankard or a platter,
And, till it stands safe on her shelf,
Nor life nor death will matter!
She vouchsafes me a tête-à-tête,
All yearning I must stifle,
And hear her learnedly descant
On *plate* and *ley* and *trifle*.
I could not ask in Cupid's school
A more engaging tutor,
But love's tabooed from this year's course—
Pauline's collecting pewter.

Now, what avails a heart of gold,
Warm as a red-rose petal,
When she for whom it beats prefers
A colder, baser metal?
Why, nothing! And the boastful I,
That treasured this possession,
Can well feel for the Phrygian king
Who loved gold past discretion.
And, should my sweet not soon relent,
A wiser, sadder suitor,
I'll offer her a heart of *lead*—
Pauline's collecting pewter!

EDWARD W. BARNARD.



ASKING TOO MUCH

HE (*after stealing a kiss*)—What would your father say if he caught me kissing
you?

SHE (*indignantly*)—Sir, I do not use profane language.

HER LAMP

OF all the treasured ornaments
 That grace my lady's room,
 From vellum books and vases rare
 To satin pampas plume
 Above a marble Artemis,
 Her lamp I dearest love—
 Her lamp with dragon heads below,
 And crimson shade above.

Not for its shining bowl I love
 Her lamp with crimson shade,
 Not for the dragon heads of bronze
 With garnet eyes inlaid,
 Not that I greet her reading 'neath
 Its glimmer after toil—
 I love her parlor lamp because
 It holds so little oil!

For once, when she had trimmed the wick,
 And burned it half the night,
 It fluttered out!—if Love be blind,
 What need of any light?
 Could I resist the warm, sweet mouth,
 My lips so very near it?—
 If Cupid didn't see that kiss,
 He had a chance to hear it!

ALOYSIUS COLL.



A DENIAL

BROWN—I thought Jones was a friend of yours.
 SMITH (*scornfully*)—Not at all—merely a relative.



COMMENT

“I THOUGHT I could get along without glasses a while longer, but I find I
 can't.”
 “Yes? It was an optical illusion.”

AS OTHERS SEE US

By Edith Elmer Wood

CATHERINE MORLEY sat at her desk, writing the note. It began abruptly, without super-description:

Why did you say that, if I did not write, you would assume I wished you to go without me? You must have known that I would write, and that I would come. All my arrangements are made. You will find me on the steamer to-morrow.

So, it was decided! She felt no regrets, no fears, no doubts. Who was there to care what she did with her already ruined life? Oh, she had not given up without a struggle! She had faithfully tried to make something out of it, to wrest success from failure; had lost courage, found it, and tried again. But, now, she was at an end.

Infinitely far away, she saw her happy childhood, ending abruptly with the death of her parents. Next came her life with her guardian, her marriage to him before she was out of short dresses, and, then, the long years of misery. His love, such as it was, had proved short-lived. The only portion of it that survived was an insane and—till now—causeless jealousy. She remembered the indescribable humiliation of its first outbreaks. But that was long ago. There is no hell to which the human soul does not grow accustomed. It marked the gradual coarsening of her nature that she came to receive his perpetual suspicions with a mere shrug of the shoulders.

Then, at last, the Fates had brought the other man. How blind they had been, not to see where they were drifting! But they had not seen—until her husband suggested it—and, then, it was too late. Yet, Catherine had

caught herself on the edge of the precipice. She was ready to sacrifice position, consideration, conventional respectability, for her love, but she clung to the remnant of her self-respect. She had promised to go to South America with him, but, in the meantime, while she was still under her husband's roof, she had forbidden his trying to see her. The end was now at hand.

"It will be no more than he expects of me," she reflected, thinking of her husband. "I don't know, on the whole, but that it will be a satisfaction to him to be proved right at last!"

She rose to post the note, not caring to trust it to a servant. At that moment, the library door opened, with a rustle of skirts and a murmur of fresh young voices. Mrs. Morley could leave her room only by passing through the library, and she shrank just then from meeting her husband's niece and a girl friend. So, she dropped down in her chair again, waiting for them to go. Nothing was farther from her thoughts than to listen to the girls' talk, but her attention was caught by her own name.

"I want you to know Aunt Catherine," Tessie was saying; "she is my ideal of a woman. She is beautiful, charming, clever, and, oh, so good!" Mrs. Morley winced. "I don't believe she was born an angel. She has made herself one by hard work, and that's ever so much more to her credit. I know she isn't happy. It's impossible that she should love Uncle Tom. I don't care if he is my uncle! No woman in her right mind could love Uncle Tom."

"Where did she learn all this wisdom?" thought the woman in the next room.

"She's as nice to him, though, as if she adored him. And he hasn't the pleasantest temper in the world. It's wonderful, the way she holds herself in hand. She is always the same—wise, gentle, serene."

The woman at her desk listened, wonderingly. Was this a picture of herself? An angel—wise—serene—self-controlled? She was both amused and touched.

The other girl said something in a lower voice.

"Oh, she's not goody-goody," cried Tessie, "and she never makes you feel inferior. That's because she puts herself out of sight entirely. If ever a woman made an ideal of duty, and lived for it, without hope of reward, here or hereafter, and without for a moment posing as a martyr or a saint, that woman is Aunt Catherine!"

Mrs. Morley was more moved than she would have acknowledged. "Poor child!" she thought; "what a tumble her idol will take before long!"

"I've seen Mrs. Morley," said the other girl, "though I've never met her. She is very beautiful. It's too bad she isn't happy. And aren't people horrid?"

Here she lowered her voice, and what followed was inaudible till Tessie exclaimed, hotly:

"It's false, every word of it! How dare any one say such a thing?"

"Oh, of course, I didn't believe it for a moment," said the other girl, smoothly.

"I should hope not!" cried Tessie. "How could any one be so cruel? That he loves her, is very likely. If I were a man, I'd fall in love with her, too. But that *she* would do or say or feel anything that an angel in heaven would blush to own—I know it's impossible!"

"Your Aunt Catherine seems to be a part of your creed," said the other girl.

"I only hope my faith in God is as strong as my faith in her!"

"And what if you should find yourself mistaken in her?"

"It is impossible."

"But just suppose?"

"I should know there was no such thing as truth or goodness in the world, and that it wasn't worth while for us ordinary mortals even to strive after them!"

Catherine Morley's head sank on her folded arms. Opposing forces were warring fiercely for the mastery. When she raised her head, her eyes were brilliant with resolve.

She carried the letter to the grate, and tossed it among the red-hot coals.



AN ISLAND STORM

THE white-winged sea-birds shoreward fly;
 Low cloud-wracks hang o'er wave and lea;
 Fierce peals of thunder shake the sky
 With answering thunder from the sea.

A fishing-smack, with mast and shroud,
 By the wild wind is rent apart,
 When from a scabbard of black cloud
 A sword of lightning cleaves its heart.

WILLIAM HAMILTON HAYNE.

LA DETTE

Par Jean Reibrach

SOURIANTE, comme lasse de bonheur, Marguerite laissa couler sur ses genoux la lettre d'Albert de Mausy. Le regard de la jeune fille se noya de rêve et son cœur se prit à battre doucement. Elle revoyait son existence, depuis le temps où, cinq ans plus tôt, orpheline, sans ressources, elle était recueillie par sa cousine Emilienne Morancey, qui l'installait à son foyer, près de son mari. M. Morancey, se montrait grave et affectueux; Emilienne, étourdie, coquette et capricieuse, mais si bonne! A ce point, d'ailleurs, qu'elle était allée jusqu'à lui assurer une dot, le jour où elle se marierait.

Et ce jour était venu. Dans quelques instants peut-être, Albert de Mausy serait là, demandant sa main. Pure formalité, car la chère réponse qu'il attendait, ne la connaissait-il pas d'avance, depuis longtemps?

A cette minute heureuse, les ombres qui, parfois, avaient pu traverser sa vie de parente pauvre, étaient envolées bien loin, dissipées à jamais. L'amour, le mariage, les joies nombreuses que l'avenir découvrait devant l'imagination de la jeune fille, c'était à Emilienne, à M. Morancey qu'elle les devrait, comme aussi elle leur devait les cinq années écoulées sans inquiétude du lendemain, sans souci, parmi les enfants naissants. Et, à l'émotion dont elle était remplie, aux palpitations de choses confondues et tendres qui agitaient son cœur, s'ajoutait encore la douceur d'une infinie reconnaissance.

Un bruit soudain tira Marguerite de sa rêverie.

D'une poussée violente, la porte

s'était ouverte, Emilienne s'élançait, bouleversée, les yeux fous:

— Marguerite! Je suis perdue!

— Quoi! Qu'y a-t-il? s'écria Marguerite.

— Mon mari! poursuivit Emilienne haletante. Il soupçonne... Il a trouvé une lettre!... Non, ne me demande pas... Plus tard, je t'expliquerai! Il est là, il va venir... Il bouleverse mes tiroirs!... Il fallait bien me sauver, il m'aurait tuée... Alors, j'ai nié, j'ai dit...

— Tu as dit?

— J'ai compté sur ton affection... Puis, à cause des enfants aussi... j'ai dit que cette lettre n'était pas à moi!

Et se jetant aux genoux de Marguerite:

— Oh! ne me livre pas! Au nom de tout ce que j'ai fait pour toi, sauve-moi, je t'en conjure! Dis qu'elle est à toi!

— A moi? balbutia la jeune fille.

Une révolte la soulevait. Se sacrifier, elle, bien! à cause d'Emilienne, à cause des enfants, à cause de Morancey lui-même!... Mais sacrifier son honneur!...

A ce moment, Emilienne bondit, affolée:

— Le voici!

Et, en effet, sous leurs regards terrifiés, M. Morancey parut. Pâle, il s'avança vers la jeune fille:

— Marguerite, à qui est cette lettre?

— A Marguerite! jeta Emilienne.

— Ce n'est pas vous que j'interroge, dit sévèrement M. Morancey. Marguerite, répondez!

La jeune fille avait courbé la tête. La rapidité des événements ne lui donnait pas le temps de se ressaisir.

La terreur d'Emilienne l'atteignait à son tour et la paralysait. Elle s'épouvanta. Des visions de massacre se levèrent. Et le souvenir des services reçus, sa situation dans la famille, sa longue accoutumance des soumissions l'oppressèrent. Elle courba la tête plus bas encore, et, d'une voix faible, à peine distincte:

— Cette lettre, dit-elle, est à moi!

— Vous mentez! cria M. Morancey avec une violence subite.

Et, tandis qu'elle se taisait, éperdue:

— Oui, vous mentez; car vous aimez Albert de Mausy!

Marguerite ne répondit pas. Renier son amour? Non. Cela était au-dessus de ses forces. Mais Emilienne sentit le danger. Elle s'écria:

— Qu'en savez-vous?

— J'ai reçu de lui un mot. Je l'attends! Ce qu'il vient me demander, c'est la main de Marguerite! Or, si Marguerite a vraiment reçu une telle lettre, qui implique son consentement, son amour même...

Il s'interrompt, se tournant vers la jeune fille:

— Marguerite, vous avez entendu? Quelle réponse ferai-je à Albert quand il se présentera?

Terrifiée, Marguerite mesurait tout à coup la profondeur de l'abîme où elle était poussée. Ce n'était plus son honneur seulement dont on lui demandait le sacrifice, c'était son amour aussi, et avec elle, c'était Albert encore qu'il fallait sacrifier! Avouer son amour, c'était démentir sa première déclaration, provoquer le désastre.

Elle ne pouvait se résoudre. Mais elle sentait, du recul où Emilienne réfugiait sa terreur, peser sur sa volonté le regard de sa cousine. Elle était la parente pauvre, faite pour tous les sacrifices. L'heure était venue: on lui demandait de payer sa dette!

Son silence, pourtant, ne pouvait se prolonger davantage. Ses lèvres tremblantes se desserrèrent:

— Répondez, dit-elle, que je ne veux pas me marier.

Une détente se fit. On entendit reprendre le souffle d'Emilienne; tandis

que, brisée, se raidissant pour ne pas tomber, Marguerite, de seconde en seconde, se pénétrait davantage de l'horreur de son sacrifice. Celui-ci était complet, absolu. Elle ne pouvait révéler à Albert la faute d'Emilienne. Et c'était son cœur à lui qu'elle brisait, en même temps que le sien, leurs deux bonheurs, leurs deux vies, qu'elle venait d'offrir pour le salut d'une autre.

M. Morancey s'inclinait devant sa femme. Une joie secrète trembla au fond de ses paroles.

— Je vous demande pardon, dit-il, de vous avoir injustement soupçonnée.

Puis, revenant à Marguerite:

— Une autre question se pose maintenant. L'homme qui a écrit cette lettre, il faut que lui, du moins, vous épouse!

— J'ai dit, répéta Marguerite, que je ne voulais pas me marier; je n'épouserai personne!

— Soit! consentit M. Morancey, après un court étonnement; mais alors... quelles sont vos intentions?

— Mes intentions?...

— Sans doute! Votre situation, désormais, près de nous, près de nos enfants!...

— Je partirai! répondit Marguerite.

M. Morancey accepta d'un salut bref et sortit.

Emilienne écouta s'éloigner le pas de son mari.

— Oh! merci! s'écria-t-elle en embrassant Marguerite; tu m'as sauvée!

Une minute, une crise de tendresse nerveuse la secoua; elle sanglota des promesses éternelles et des paroles confuses. Mais bientôt, s'apaisant, elle essuya ses larmes, tapota de poudre ses paupières rougies et jeta un coup d'œil vers une glace:

— Enfin, que veux-tu? ma pauvre Marguerite; il vaut encore mieux ainsi! Si tu m'avais refusé, tu ne pouvais plus accepter de dot, Albert se serait retiré. Tu n'as donc pas de regret à avoir! Du reste, je ne t'abandonnerai pas, je te ferai une rente.

Marguerite eut un pâle sourire. Un moment, elle avait espéré que tout

pouvait se réparer encore, qu'Emilienne irait trouver Albert, lui confesserait... Son espoir avait croulé. Elle songeait maintenant qu'elle n'accepterait rien, qu'elle travaillerait pour gagner sa vie. Mais à quoi bon répondre? Devant l'inconscience de celle qui lui devait son salut, toute parole se décourageait.

Elle pria seulement:

— Laisse-moi! J'ai besoin d'être seule!

Alors, quand elle fut seule, le timbre, tout à coup, sonna à l'entrée. Marguerite fut debout, les mains à sa poitrine:

— Albert!

Le bruit ouaté des portes retomba. Pâle, tragique, elle écouta le silence. A son propre drame, à cette minute, s'ajoutait le drame d'Albert. Puis tout au fond de sa pensée, une révolte dernière agita un espoir encore. Elle imagina un remords d'Emilienne, évoqua une soudaine explosion de tumulte, les portes tout à coup battantes, Albert apparaissant...

Mais les portes retombèrent, du même bruit ouaté; il y eut des pas tristes que n'accompagnait aucune parole. Albert partait, et la porte d'entrée, à son tour, fut refermée, retombant sur son cœur, comme une dalle sur une tombe.



TO A FALSE GOD

To a false god, I raised mine altar. Dight
With silks, my soul spun many a day and night,
Of woof of dreams and gems that were no less
Than glad tears, crystallized through tenderness
To be a comely crowning for his might.

There swung the censer of my heart's delight
Till dawned that day; I could not choose but guess
That I had cast all joy life might possess
To a false god.

Now by destroying may I build aright?
Shamefaced, I grovel in the great gods' sight.
What prayer may bid their condescension bless,
Hearing their mocking at a fool's distress,
A fool who hath been priest and acolyte
To a false god!

McCREA PICKERING.



THE WAY IT USUALLY ENDS

VON BLUMER—What kind of a cook shall I fetch home?

MRS. VON BLUMER—Get one about thirty, who can make good bread, knows how to cook all meats, can make fine pastry, who never has company, doesn't go out nights, and has the very best references.

VON BLUMER—But suppose I can't get such a cook?

MRS. VON BLUMER—Oh, well, get any one you can, then.

THE SAD STORY OF SAM

SAM SMITH had much naughtiness in him;
 To piety no one could win him;
 And cocktails quadruple
 He drank without Ⓣ
 Clear down to the very last Ⓜ.

Head clerk in a drug-store was Sam,
 But sickness he'd frequently sham,
 And borrow a dime
 From the till (which was crime!)
 In order to purchase a 3.

The druggist, at last, said: "An 3
 Of prevention is worth, I pron 5,
 A full pound of cure;
 You're crooked, I'm sure,
 So I think I will give you the b 3!"



HER PASSPORTS

"DO you think you will be received by society?" sneered the Cynic;
 "never! Your grandfather shaved—notes!"

"No matter," she said, serenely; "I shall 'arrive'."

"But you will be snubbed."

"Never!"

"You will, as surely as my name is Cynic."

"I'll stake my million that I shall be welcomed," said the woman.

"You think your riches will be your passports? Be undeceived; gold is not the coin of Belgravia."

"Still, I'll succeed; you'll see," insisted Confidence.

"Tell me," said the Cynic, convinced by her manner, "your winning card."

"I have an inexhaustible supply of new amusements," she gleefully whispered.

Hearing which, the Cynic knew she was very clever. "You are right," said he, bowing deferentially over her extended hand; "you are bound to succeed."

MINNA THOMAS ANTRIM.



SHE—What is the feminine for earl?
 HE—Well—er—it is usually heiress.

THE BURGLAR

By Tom Masson

THE burglar put the candlestick on the bureau with his left hand—in his right he held a revolver—and examined the necklace critically by the feeble light. It took him some time. There were twenty-six pearls, and his scrutiny was evenly distributed among them all. The necklace had been purchased the week before for one hundred thousand dollars. The burglar had read the account in the papers, and he was wondering whether the purchaser had received the worth of his money. He was a cool hand, this burglar; but, then, he had once been a gentleman.

On the far side of the room, screened by a friendly portière, stood a detective. He, also, had a revolver in his hand. He had come in on rubber-soled shoes an instant before. The burglar didn't have rubber-soled shoes; but he had taken off his boots downstairs, and stood now in his stocking feet. Perhaps, he could not afford rubber-soled shoes. Times may have been dull.

The burglar, finishing his scrutiny, folded up the necklace, and, putting it carelessly in the pocket of his coat, prepared to leave the room. There were other things of value there, but he had come for that alone.

As he moved out, an object on the wall took his attention. It was a picture. He held the candle up to get a better view of it, and, as he did so, he started back, involuntarily. His own face stared at him from the frame. She had not forgotten him. Well, he thought, it was tit for tat. If she still kept his picture on the wall, he had her necklace in his pocket. Half-smiling

at the thought, he started out of the room once more, when something tucked in the corner of the mirror attracted his attention. It was a clipping from a society journal.

He put down the candlestick again, and ventured forward. The clipping was much rumpled, and the light spluttered, but still he could read it.

It is said that Mrs. Peter Blanton made some fuss about accepting a hundred-thousand-dollar pearl necklace her hubby gave her the other day, because he had asked some other woman to select it for him. However that may be, I am authoritatively informed that she is to wear it at the Bellknobs' dinner next Wednesday evening.

Mrs. Peter, as every one knows, is a thoroughbred, and not the one to turn down a necklace just because her hubby got advice. It will be remembered that, four years ago, when she married that scapegoat, Jack Somerset, who embezzled, and was caught and served a term, she went on just as if nothing had happened, and captured Peter Blanton by pure nerve. Well, it's something to have a better half who can buy pearl necklaces every day in the year if he wishes to, even though he has to hire help to make his selection.

As the burglar picked up the candlestick once more, he turned and faced the bed. With her head on the lace pillow, a beautiful woman lay sleeping. It was rather an interesting situation. There was the burglar, with the mask over his face to conceal his identity, and the hundred-thousand-dollar necklace, that the woman's husband had given her, loosely thrown in his pocket. There was the woman quietly sleeping as if nothing in the world was the matter; and there was the detective, watching—and waiting.

The burglar hesitated a moment. Then, he stepped to the bed, and, with

his revolver, tapped lightly on the brass foot. The woman opened her eyes, slowly at first, and, with a sudden cry, started up. The burglar dropped his mask.

"Eleanor!" he said.

With a swift glance, she recognized him.

"Jack!" she exclaimed. "You—here! What does this mean?"

He held up the necklace. "I came for this," he said. "I know a place where I can pawn it. I'll send you the ticket. Since I got out, I've tried to be honest, but it was no use. The taint is on me. I wouldn't have come here if this was yours, but you know he can stand it."

She shivered. This woman, whose soul had been seared in so many fires, grew suddenly cold. Yet, in her eyes, for an instant shone the light of an old affection. She loved him still, and this daring act, its very audacity, its dramatic conception, appealed to her.

"Take it!" she said. "If the worst

comes to the worst, I'll swear I gave it to you. Kiss me—and go."

He laid down his revolver on the silk coverlet. At this moment, the detective stepped from behind the portière, and covered his quarry.

The woman's expression changed utterly. She turned to the intruder. "Where did *you* come from?" she asked.

"From your husband, madame. He gave orders to have the house watched."

"And are you the only watcher?"

"Yes."

She reached forward, and clutched the revolver that the burglar had laid aside—for her sake. Leveling it full at the detective, she said:

"Now, if you attempt to stop him, I swear before God I'll shoot you!"

Still pointing the revolver, she turned quietly to the burglar.

"Now, Jack, kiss me," she said, "and run along. I never wanted it, anyhow, and it will be such a good joke on Peter!"



YESTERDAY

CLOSE, just behind us, silently she stands;
 We turn and gaze into her wistful eyes,
 Where shadow of past joys forever lies.
 Dear Yesterday! We reach forth loving hands,
 But she hears not entreaties nor commands.
 Her head is crowned with happy hours that we
 Once shared together with light-hearted glee;
 Forget-me-nots bind up her hair's bright strands,
 And lavender decks all her drapery
 With faint, sweet blooms; her smiles appear
 A tender radiance Memory dooms to be
 The golden setting for an opal tear.
 Ah! sweet, sweet Yesterday, so far away,
 And yet so close we oft forget To-day!

VENITA SEIBERT.



LOVE in a cottage is not always so very inexpensive—at Newport, for example.

“TO LOVE, HONOR AND OBEY”

By Margret Temple

SHE was one of those fair, pale women, too delicately fashioned for perfect beauty. The slender lines of her figure just escaped being angular, and the deep eyes looked wistfully out from their setting of purplish shadows and arched, black brows. Art had assisted nature so skilfully that, if a touch here and there intensified the latter's handiwork, it was hardly to be detected; though the contrast between those marvelously black brows and the pale hair that fell low on her forehead, like a little canopy of gold, was startling until it became evident that there was no deception.

Mrs. Osbourne could never fail to satisfy. There was a restful harmony about her every gesture which defied criticism. She was exquisite without being beautiful, and charming without being effusive, she claimed, moreover, the rare gift of a kindly wit. No one felt the worse for her clever little speeches, which were guiltless of any sting; so the world rose up graciously, and with one acclaim yielded her the band of laurel, which, after all, is but a symbol of infinite striving.

She was tired of the pomp, the circumstance, the notoriety, which her individuality yielded her; tired of being looked at and commented upon and whispered about; sick unto death of the shallow, babbling crowd of sycophants, cringing at her chariot-wheels, ready at the first provocation to seize and drag her to the dust.

To those who hold it in their hands, there is nothing more nauseating than social prominence. There is too little of the natural life, and too much of the artificial, ever to satisfy; and Mar-

garet Osbourne had come to know just the exact market value of the popularity which she had worked for and attained, and now struggled to cast from her. Fame brings some reward for toil, but notoriety brings simply disillusionment.

It was Springtime in New York. The parks were bursting into green, and there was sunshine everywhere, with the hint of Summer. The elect had long since fled from the city; and Mrs. Osbourne, being unavoidably detained from sailing on the *Kaiser Wilhelm*, was rather happy at being left alone.

There was now no need to hold up a mask; there was no struggle to be maintained; she could roll serenely along Fifth avenue without seeing a familiar face. There were great crowds thronging the streets, but they belonged to the mighty middle class, and Margaret Osbourne meant no more to them than Mary Jones—perhaps less. So, in cheerful freedom, every afternoon she issued from her darkened house, and drove to the Park, lying luxuriously back in her victoria, utterly weary and thinking many thoughts.

It was late in May—a soft, hazy day. Little blazes of sunlight burst out, only to be obliterated by some huge, fleecy cloud, hanging like a sentinel overhead. The Park lay a bed of rolling green. Squares of tulips and crocuses and nodding daffodils, tucked here and there in unexpected places, threw away their elusive perfume. There was unspoiled beauty even in New York.

It was nearing dusk, and Margaret

Osbourne's carriage was rolling, smoothly and noiselessly, through an unfrequented part of the Park, when the footman uttered a sharp exclamation. Turning her eyes instinctively to the right, Margaret looked straight into the face of a man who had risen from one of the benches. He was shabbily dressed, and his face was pale and dissipated; but it was the face of a gentleman.

She caught her breath, and shrank back as if to conceal herself, and the hand that held her parasol trembled perceptibly.

"Margaret!"

He had spoken her name aloud. For a moment, the impulse came to ignore him; to turn haughtily to the footman, and bid him drive on; to stare with cruel, unseeing eyes into that white face. But it was, after all, only an impulse; her character was molded on too large a scale to permit her to resort to any of the foibles which would have swayed a smaller nature.

"Stop, James!" she said, quietly; and the horses, rearing and fretting, were pulled back on their haunches, and the footman sprang from his place.

"I will get out," she said, calmly, "and you can drive around the corner, and wait. Come for me in fifteen minutes—not longer."

There was no one in sight as she stepped to the ground. The man stood facing her, his hat in his hand, his head held well up, a pride in his poise that she could not override.

"Margaret," he said, again, this time almost in a whisper, his eyes on the delicate face he had known so well, "how little you have changed!"

"Hush!" She held up a warning hand, and then added, feverishly, "What is the meaning of this? Why are you here, in this condition? And by what right—yes, by what right do you presume to stop me in this open spot?"

Her voice was quiet and restrained, but bitterly cold, and it brought a faint flush to the man's thin cheek.

He turned as if to answer impulsively, but checked himself.

"I could not help speaking," he replied, in a low voice; "I could not! I know I have no claim; but you passed so like a vision out of a dream—unchanged, unspoiled——"

"I will not listen to you! Tell me what you wish from me. Are you—" her eyes wandered quickly to his shabby coat—"are you—in need?"

The color in his cheek deepened to a shamed red.

"No!"

"Why, then," she retorted, accusingly, "do you lounge here in the Park like a common tramp?"

"I was looking at—the old place."

"What is the use of trying to deceive me?" Her face paled, and bitter pain lay heavy in her eyes. "Do you think, because I am free from you, that I do not feel your disgrace?"

"Margaret! No! Don't go! Sit here with me, just a moment. Oh, pity me a little, dear! If you could know what it is for me just to touch your dress—to speak to you, though you revile me! You have put me from you—oh, I am not defending myself; I was worse than a beast. I made your life a misery, a torment, but"—he looked her in the face, steadily—"you cannot belittle my love for you. You cannot say I ever failed in——"

She turned from him, impatiently, passionate protest in every line of her figure. "I tell you I will not listen. Do you wish to disgrace me a second time? Is not once enough? Do you suppose my servant did not recognize you? Do you suppose I shall not be the one to suffer for this little scene? You cannot say anything. Of what use would it be? I have not the patience to listen!"

"Dear! Oh, don't be so hard!" he urged, pleadingly; "try to bear with me just a little—to feel some of the old love. No! I don't mean that—not the old love. I have made that impossible; but feel pity, Margaret—pity for what I once was to you!"

There was silence for a moment. Then, she turned upon him suddenly, and flung out her arms.

"Marion! Don't! Don't! *Don't* make me live it all over again!" she cried, despairingly. "When the court gave me my divorce, I thought that it meant freedom; that I could put the old life away, and begin again. "But," bitterly, "it is no use. I am caught fast in the mesh. I shall never, as long as you and I inhabit the same globe, be free again—never, never!"

As the man looked at her, his heart misgave him. How he had crushed and stamped the beauty out of her life! How she had struggled and pleaded and borne with him! How she had striven to force some of her strength into his weakness! Through what humiliating mires had he not dragged her delicate spirit! The only wonder was that it could live and struggle—not with its old, unconquered energy, for some faint essence had gone from it forever; but the miracle was that it could still lift itself bravely to the sunlight, and fight on.

He was one of those men who, through their very weaknesses, attract women. He was magnetic and strangely gentle, with a graceful assurance of manner which won him friends where it could not win admiration. Men and women were strangely lenient toward him, and liked him, when in their hearts they knew they should despise him.

When he first met Margaret Rolston, he was a popular man-about-town, courted and made much of for his pleasing personality and his versatility. He could dance, sing and talk, better than most men, and was something of a dabbler in art and letters; while she, surfeited with frivolity and the shallowness of the people whose lives ran beside hers, turned naturally and gratefully to a congeniality which seemed like a gift from heaven.

Osbourne could hardly have lived the life he had and fail to have per-

fect knowledge of women—if such a thing be possible; and he swept the girl off her feet, with a fiery devotion which was as delicate as it was genuine, and sprang from a very reverent love. Tender, deferential, considerate, as no other man had ever been, he was an unspoken answer to all the whispered questions in her heart.

The men about the club decided that Osbourne would settle down after his marriage; for even they had not fathomed the pitiful weakness of his character. It was not until two years had passed that Margaret Osbourne awoke to the fact that she had married an inveterate drinker—a man who would sell his soul for a glass of liquor.

At first, she tried to keep him home, to win him from the clubs and cafés, with all the arts of coquetry and allurements which had brought him to her feet; but, though he loved her as few men love, her hold on him was as weak as a baby's, compared to that other great, overpowering passion. How she worked, how she struggled, how she pleaded, how she endured, none save herself and that man ever knew. She was too proud not to face the world bravely, and too worldly-wise to show it any but a smiling face.

That he gambled, she at first did not realize. There was no one to tell her, and he concealed it with a cunning that was wonderful.

For five years, she dragged his disgrace around with her, smiling, concealing, facing the world with a monumental courage; and then, when concealment was no longer possible, when her endurance had reached the straining point, and snapped—then she took her ruined life into the courts, and, as quietly as possible, obtained her freedom.

The inner circle of society gossiped and pitied and blamed, shrinking sensitively from the notoriety; but, as Mrs. Osbourne's father died while the divorce was yet pending, leaving her his entire fortune, it generously decided, after an almost too

lengthy indecision, that she was more sinned against than sinning, and that its sacred portals should not be irrevocably closed against her.

Osbourne left for France immediately upon the closing of the proceedings, and was speedily forgotten, while the woman lifted her dauntless head, which had not yet learned to droop, and forced an undivided homage from a world which had condescendingly taken her into its arms.

As she now stood before him, her soft draperies falling to her feet in stately folds, her face marred by the old look of suffering and patience, a sickening sense of the thoroughness of his handiwork rushed over the man. He had succeeded in fastening his burden to her shoulders for all time. With all her courage, she could not shake it off. It was the legacy he had left of his love.

"Dear," he said, softly, and, an overwhelming pity moving him, he took her hand, and forced her to sit beside him on the bench, "don't let me see that look on your face; don't let me realize what an utter wreck I have made of your life. You know too well that I am not worth a thought, much less a tear. I have been, from first to last, a thing without strength, without stamina, without honor."

"No, no! Oh, don't say that—don't say it!" She put out her hand as if to ward off a blow.

He shrugged his shoulders. "What is the use of shutting one's eyes to the truth?" he returned, bitterly. "Did you not shrink from me just a moment since? Have I ever brought you anything but pain—just everlasting, hideous pain?"

She was silent for a moment, and then she lifted her head with a beautiful honesty in her wistful eyes, and said, proudly:

"I would not give up the old joy, the days when you were my lover—the sweetest lover a girl ever had—not if all the pain in my life could be taken from me."

"Were you honestly happy, Mar-

garet?" For a moment, his face glowed with the old, turbulent passion.

"Happier," she said, softly, "than I can ever be in heaven—if there is a heaven!"

"Have I taught you to doubt that, too?"

"Oh, I don't know! We don't know anything these days, do we? Sometimes, I think that a just God could not look unmoved at our pitiful struggles—at our sorrows, our humiliations, our endless groping."

Her hands had fallen into her lap, and the small head had drooped a little in an attitude of helpless weariness.

"Margaret," he said, passionately, "I was worse than a coward to speak to you to-day. It was the same old story of contemptible weakness. If—if I had lived a better life since—I went away, it might have been different. But what am I at this moment, but a miserable, craven drunkard? Oh, don't shrink, dear; don't be afraid of the words. You see I am not, and there is only one grace God has left me—the grace to be ashamed!"

He paused, his face twitching, the blood mounting in a wave to his forehead, and staining it a dull red.

She did not speak, and he went on, slowly: "Child, you could not fathom the depths of blackness that my soul has faced—yes, and learned to face without shrinking. Do you know that I am absolutely penniless—a vagrant on the face of the earth; that I have gambled away every penny in the world that I owned? Do you know how I lived over there, from hand to mouth, trusting to luck, sometimes winning, sometimes losing, but always clinging to the vice that has ruined me? Oh, I don't wonder that you turn sick—it is a degrading story."

He passed his hand nervously through his hair, and his sunken eyes seemed to search the deepening shadows. There was little need of telling his story—it was written in his face, for all the world to read.

"Do you know?"—he turned fever-

ishly to her again—"that sometimes I go near to madness, when I am myself? I just have to drink to get away from it. You cannot understand. But I tell you, Margaret, the curse of wine is in my blood. It is stronger than I am; it is bound with every tremulous nerve; it *is* I! Do you suppose, when I left you, I did not try? I was determined to come back and force you to say that you hadn't given me half a chance; but"—he threw out his hands with a helpless gesture—"you see—you see!"

She sat quite still. The faint breezes lifted the soft hair from her brow, and ruffled the manifold flounces of her long, sweeping gown, lying in neglected splendor on the grass. Her face was pale, with a deathly pallor that frightened him.

"Margaret!" he almost whispered, "do you know that, vile and unworthy as I am, I have cherished the memory of your purity, your strength, your high purpose? Do you think I have not wondered how Providence could have given into my hands so pure a thing, to pollute? Do you think it is not death to me, in my better moments, to know that I am beyond salvation, that I am just—too weak? It is that thought which stings—to know that, through my weakness, I can consummate more misery than the lowest criminal that walks the earth. Do you know that sometimes I could pray to die—to die when I was quite myself—decently and like a gentleman; to be in my death the old, fond lover that, with all his faults, you loved too well? I used to read over the accounts of brave men who had died fighting for their country, who had given their lives for others—and I was mad to be a *man*, in my death, at least!"

He paused, his hands clenched on his knees, a glow in his eyes, born of excitement; and she, watching him, for the first time noticed the high, prominent cheek-bones and the heavy shadows under the eyes, which had

fallen so pitifully far back in his head.

"And, when," he went on, after a moment, "the doctors told me that liquor was just so much poison to me; that—oh, I am ashamed to say it!—I would go off in a drunken sleep, oblivious of right or wrong, fame or honor—then, oh, my wife, I did try—try so bitterly hard!"

She put out her hand, and laid it on his knee, softly, silently, quivering with an agony of sympathy; and for moments there was silence, the man looking wonderingly down at that small messenger from paradise, half-afraid to touch it, sick with shame and sorrow.

At last, she spoke, slowly and painfully. "You have not been drinking—lately?"

"No! on my soul, no!"

"Since when?"

"Since I left the boat. Don't pity me, dear! I have reached the end of my rope. I haven't even enough with me to buy a drink." And he laughed cynically as he saw her horrified face. "Oh, you needn't be afraid—I shall not starve. There are plenty of men in New York who, in spite of what I am, are still willing to lend me a dollar, and then"—he looked down at his hands—the long, slender artist's hands—and smiled scornfully with self-appreciation—"these," he said, slowly, as if determined to speak, "these, worthless as they look, have kept the wolf from the door for many a month. I am too clever with the cards to starve anywhere, especially—here!"

"Don't! oh, don't!"

"Does it still hurt you so much?"

She lifted her eyes, heavy with passion.

"It can never hurt me less," she said, slowly. "It is the one weak spot in my armor of compromises."

"Then keep it so!" he cried, passionately. "Surely, if ever a woman had reason to know disgust, you have. I *want* you to scorn me—to see to what depths I have fallen, and wonder that you could ever have

cared! Look at me, and look in horror! Indeed, dear, you can't help me up; I have come to the end. When I first saw you this afternoon, I had some mad idea of pleading—of trying to drag myself back into your favor, to have you forgive me, and then go away—anywhere! God knows I am sick of the dregs, but"—he paused a moment, fearfully—"when I saw the old look of horror, of patient resignation, of unspeakable pain, growing in your eyes, then—I forgot myself, and my only impulse was to spare you, to hide that poor, pitiful face, even from my eyes; to go out of your life once and for all, like the beast that I am, slinking away, abashed, before the eyes of a good woman."

She sat as she had sat most of the time—quite still, her hands lying helplessly inert, her eyes staring blankly into the evening shades.

The silence of death was in her heart, and more than its pain. She could not move—she could not cry out; she could only sit like a dumb brute, and suffer—suffer. She was back again in the old life. The years had fallen from her at a touch, and she was listening to the old tones, the old words, the old inflections, and the compelling voice that asked nothing, that faltered before her, self-condemned; that yet, in an insistent minor, all unheard by aught save her own heart, cried plaintively for mercy—simply mercy, mercy, mercy!

"Oh, God!" She thought she screamed the words aloud, but no sound came from her set lips. Her heart was fighting against her reason. "He is so weak!" she argued, courageously; "and I am strong. He is poor, and ill, and alone; and I have more than enough. Would I not be viler than he has ever been to let him go? I cannot do it; oh, I cannot! I am not afraid to take up the burden again. Women have borne heavier ones, and borne them bravely. Why should I, with the rest of the world, shrink away from him?"

At this moment, the man leaned for-

ward and laid his hand softly on her hand. She swayed dizzily, and then, with one little moan, like the abandonment of a lost soul, oblivious of time, or place, or eternity, she flung herself forward on his breast. She thrust her trembling hands through the tangled hair, in the old, familiar way; she pressed her lips to brow and temple and sunken eyes; she wrapped him to her, as a mother wraps a sinful child; there was no thought of reproach, or blame, or recrimination—just love, beautiful, devouring, all-satisfying love!

And the man gave a little gasp—of pain, perhaps—and then his arms clasped her, and he was still, while she laughed and whispered and sobbed and held him with her hungry arms, and loved him, calling him her boy, her darling, her dear one.

The clinking of chains and noise of rolling wheels startled her. She looked up, and then drew herself away, but his head lay heavy against her.

"James! Holmes! Come! come quickly! Why don't you come?"

The startled footman, galvanized into life, leaped from the box of the carriage, and hurried to her.

"It is your master!" she said, imperiously. "It is Mr. Osbourne. James must help lift him to the carriage. I think he has fainted."

The man stood for a moment as if stunned, his eyes on the quiet face resting against the laces of her gown. Then, as she made an impatient gesture, he bent forward and, trembling a little, laid his hand reverently on the worn coat just above the heart. It was quite still.

"I—am—afraid—" he stammered, his face paling, and his eyes shifting fearfully before hers.

"Well?"

"I think—I am afraid—we had better get to a drug-store—get a doctor."

She stood before him, cold and passionless, a very awful figure.

"You mean—? Oh, I know! Don't speak to me! Holmes, Holmes! Let me be quiet! I must

be quiet! See, there are people all about!"

Her frail arms had closed, with cruel strength, upon the drooping head at her breast.

"I will get him to a drug-store,"

the man whispered, frightened. "Let me call——"

"No!" Her voice rang cold and clear through the murmuring trees.

"No! Lift him into the carriage. I am going to take him—*home!*"



THE UNCOMMERCIAL 400

IN mental arithmetic, we are unversed;
We balk at the hint of "addition;"
That means *nouveaux riches*, with the dollar-mark cursed,
And persons who push for position.

"Subtraction" we find of some use—in divorce;
A "dividend" suitably thrills us;
But "multiplication" is vulgar, of course;
And the sign of "equality" chills us.



THE PITY OF IT

FIRST PHILOSOPHER—How base and mercenary the world is growing!
What have we to do with gold?

SECOND PHILOSOPHER (*sadly*)—Nothing.



TIME, OF COURSE

FREDDY—Grandpa, did you once have hair like snow?

GRANDPA—Yes, my boy.

FREDDY—Well, who shoveled it off?



APPRECIATION

SHE—What! American beauties, dear! Could you afford them?

HE (*candidly*)—No, I couldn't.

SHE—How lovely of you!

GAPHANK-ON-THE-HUMP NOTES

By Our Special Correspondent

THERE is quite an epidemic in our midst of mushroom appetite and toad-stool judgment.

Oldest inhabitants' trousers are more worn this season than last, and their tales are longer.

Our friends, the expert fishermen from the city, are coming in with short strings and long yarns.

Luther Lopstock has been compelled to quit his job as echo for the Welkin House, on account of a severe attack of bronchitis; and Rollo Hollar has accepted the position. Rollo has gained considerable elocutionary experience by taking part in home-talent dramas, and will doubtless make a splendid echo.

Not to be outdone by his competitors, the enterprising landlord of the Tanner House has secured the services of Mr. Laurence Scanlon, the popular singing comedian, as Tyrolean yodeler, to add to the weird charms of the Lover's Leap, which, as heretofore, will be for the sole use of the guests of the Tanner. Mr. Scanlon, who contemplates remaining until the opening of the theatrical season, has kindly consented to assist the head-waiter in emergencies, and will, at all times, superintend the transportation of baggage to and from the station.

We are pleased to announce that the Roorback House, which in the past has had a great deal of trouble with drunken incompetents, has at last secured a first-class hermit, in the person of Professor Schwartzenschnitzel. This gentleman has had nearly thirty years' experience in his profession, and brings recommendations from some of the leading resort hotels in the country, as a sober, expert and thoroughly reliable hermit. He also has a splendid répertoire of legends for the entertainment of visitors. The professor makes his own wampum, arrow-heads, and prehistoric relics, and they are the finest we have ever seen. He is a native of far-off Pomerania, where, we understand, all the best hermits come from.

Mr. Reginald Depeyster-Slamm's crimson flyer, "The Tornado," and Farmer Joel Jawkins's brindle bull, "Belshazzar," met on the bridge which spans Bump's Brook, early last Wednesday afternoon. Messrs. Depeyster-Slamm and Joel Jawkins are each suing the other for damages to his property. The bridge has been repaired by the selectmen, who have sued both Messrs. Depeyster-Slamm and Joel Jawkins for sixty-six dollars and sixty-six cents, the cost of the work and material.



WOMAN'S FORGIVENESS

YOUR offense she may blot from her mind,
 When a woman's forgiveness you crave;
 Yet, though she forgive you, you'll find
 She will never forget she forgave.

GEORGE BIRDSEYE.

MATRIMONY AND THE MUSTARD-POT

By Lady Colin Campbell

“**I** TELL you what it is, old chap; what one wants is a wife.”

This laconic sentence, uttered in a resigned tone of hesitating self-conviction, was the outcome of a momentary pause for practical reflection upon the empty mustard-pot, which lay under the shadow of a tall pepper-castor that seemed to disclaim any relationship of size or pattern to its neighbor, midway between Guy Manners and his guest.

Guy Manners was not particular about his modest bachelor requirements, as far as self-gratification was concerned; rather the reverse. Bachelorhood had bred refinement in his intellectual, rather than in his more material and animal, tastes. To the average mind, his condition was merely “uncomfortable.” To the moderate epicure of the twentieth century, it was an anomaly of chaotic disorder. Domestically, life seemed with him to be a perpetual picnic.

In his person, he was clean, well-groomed and not without some vanity. But these attributes fell short of impressing themselves upon his immediate surroundings; and, although he rose partially to the occasion at supreme moments, he lacked that fine sense of the fitness of things which, with unfailing accuracy, ensures the fire always being kept up, the water ever hot, and the mustard-pot duly charged.

His guest turned his gaze slowly from the defective cruet, and fastened a pair of strong, deep-set, gray eyes upon his host, whose look was directed toward the window, upon which the heavy raindrops splashed incontinently.

Frowning slightly, he continued to look at Guy, as though working up to a remark of disapproval. But, though he disapproved of empty mustard-pots as an adjunct to fried bacon, it was the remark made by his host which was occupying his thoughts just then, and it momentarily distracted his attention from the seasoning of rashers. He had, before now, heard many declarations from Guy relating to women and marriage and the whole vocabulary of tender emotions. But he knew the light-hearted words in which his friend was wont to skip over these subjects; and he treated them with the mild indifference that he deemed fitting toward one who was everlastingly in love with this or that woman.

Now, however, he fancied he could trace a ring of something less insincere in the voice. It was not the individual with whom Guy had, from time to time, professed himself enamoured that caused Reginald Jamieson any uneasiness. The successive phases duly passed away.

It was the principle, as now enunciated, which looked threatening. To Jamieson’s more mature experience of human nature, matrimony in the abstract was a dangerous topic, when referred to in conjunction with circumstances of solitary confinement in a country cottage, a damp, unpleasant day and an empty mustard-pot.

But why this prejudice? Why should Mr. Reginald Jamieson, barrister-at-law, have any inherent objection to a friend, of no long standing, entering upon the holy estate—especially seeing that he himself was mated?

Truth to tell, there was no substantial reason, except that, like many thousands of his fellow-creatures, this one had his pet theories and his prejudices. And, just because Reginald Jamieson was no more logical, no less captious and no more rational a being than the majority, he rejoiced in administering to others advice he had obviously refrained from acting upon himself.

Now, it was simply one of his pet theories, and he had many, that it was not to the advantage of any young man, with health and contentment, deliberately to contemplate taking the thorny path of matrimony. To tumble headlong into the deep water was one thing; to plan it with premeditation was altogether a different thing.

On one or two occasions, Guy had heard Reginald wax eloquent in inveighing against marriage; and, not unnaturally, as he had never been introduced to Mrs. Jamieson, had come to the conclusion that they were to be reckoned among the legion of the unhappily married. He had always admired his friend's abilities, and, as it is often but a short step from admiration to envy, he derived some secret consolation, at odd moments, from the feeling of pity which the supposed circumstances of his ill-matched friend evoked within his breast.

"Want a wife, indeed!" said Jamieson, with a somewhat forced laugh. "Why, my dear Guy, you must be dreaming! What you want is not a wife, but a butler——"

"My good man——" expostulated his host.

"Now, what could be more satisfactory," broke in the other, "what more blessed, than the comfort and consolation which would be afforded by a clean, respectable, God-fearing institution such as I suggest? You come home fagged out, the smiling face of your mature and portly body-guard meets you on the door-step, and tells you the fire is ablaze in the study, where he has laid the *Times*

and evening papers on the table, close to which stand a pot of steaming hot tea and a box of cigars. As you sink into the arm-chair, he gently removes your muddy boots, and supplies in their place the grateful comfort of carpet slippers. Noiselessly, he moves from the room, and leaves you in undisturbed repose, in the soft light of the shaded lamp, till dinner comes to complete your sense of material enjoyment. He learns to wait on your every movement, to anticipate your moods, to talk when you wish to talk, and then to be dismissed from your presence when you will. All goes with precision, punctuality and smoothness." Jamieson took a long breath, as though sighing over the renewed visions of bliss conjured up from brighter memories of the past. Then, he went on quickly, with a dramatic wave of the hand: "Contrast, my dear boy, with this, the spasmodic irregularities of a loving and faithful spouse, who, with the best intentions in the world, will cast you into the vortex of a family-gathering on your arrival at home, or bring you a hundred unimportant trivialities to discuss, and cause you to re-read your evening 'Special' several times over before it becomes intelligible to you; who will sit and gossip with you while she knits interminable necessities of clothing and Winter wear, while you sit idle and unproductive, echoing her sentiments out of affection; or, in a numbing torpor of indifference to her platitudes, pretending to be contented with the 'occupation' of a cigarette, which, before the advent of your shrieking first-born, was of the finest Dubec, but now the circumstances of paternal economy have reduced to a cheap American alternative. These, my dear Guy, are the impressive trifles that yet make just the difference. These are the alternatives which, material and unimportant though they may sound, yet make such changes in our lives. Think of it—ponder it. What you want is not the mother of your de-

scendants, but the minister to your necessities."

Jamieson noticed a change already in Guy's face. He swallowed his cup of coffee, which this harangue had allowed to grow cold. Then, he bethought him of one more thrust; he drew a weapon he had never before used; quickly, it flashed out; he was amazed at his readiness of resource. "After all, supposing you really, seriously, contemplated the sacrifice of your independence, Guy, my friend, what right have you to risk bringing into the world living souls—always an awful responsibility—merely in order that you may promote your own temporary comfort?"

Guy plunged a worn spoon into the jam-pot.

"You're deuced practical in your arguments against the married state, Reginald. But I am not quite the Oriental voluptuary you try to make me out. Life scarcely seems to me to consist in being waited upon by an obsequious man-servant."

"No, I don't say that it does. All I mean is, don't marry because you think you have exhausted the resources of a single life. When you have been in love with one woman for at least two years, and feel that life is utterly impossible without her, then you may turn your back on my protestations. But the thought of your taking up marriage just like a man to whom it occurs to take up botany or china-collecting, is too dreadful; it suggests—a—a lack of resource—a—a conventionality of which I should never have thought of accusing you."

"Well," said Guy, pulling out his cigarette-case, and handing it across the table to his guest, "I'll tell you what I shall do: I shall try and get to know something more about the unexplored country before deciding to live in it. Suppose I go around and stay with all my married friends, and study the—the——"

"And prospect, in fact; capital idea! No, thanks—I'll smoke a pipe."

"Yes, that is just what I mean;

make a study of the thing, you know. The fact is, one never notices one way or another when staying in a house, whether things are working smoothly or not. One eats and drinks, shoots with one's host, flirts with his wife if she is pretty, or with his daughters if there are any, and only thinks of—of—well, you know the——"

"Yes, perfectly—only thinks of one's self—eh?"

"That's about it, Reggie. Now, I'll come and begin with you. Ask me, and I'll stay a month."

Guy chuckled internally at his diplomatic turning of the tables, and at the prospect of finding out what was the secret discordant note in the Jamieson *ménage* which could have given rise to such anti-nuptial sentiments as those of which Reginald delivered himself so frequently.

"You have asked me," he continued, "several times, but I have never been able to come. So, now, name your day, and I'll begin the course." He swung around to the fire, and stirred the logs into a blaze, cheerfully.

"We shall be only too delighted if you will honor us with a long visit, old man. I'm afraid you will find it rather a dull process, though. Nature is charming, botany is a science, pictures are fascinating, but you don't want to listen always to long discourses upon the methods of the various schools."

"Perhaps not; but human nature is always fascinating. Though, maybe," Guy added, with a faint smile at the corners of his mouth, "married life is the driest of sciences."

"And the most difficult," replied Jamieson, "because you don't take it up till your education is supposed to be complete."

"Then, in your opinion, the sooner the better—eh?"

"If necessary, yes. With most men, it is a luxury and not a necessity, though."

"And with women?"

"Oh, I can't be responsible for them."

"But you are."

"How do you mean?"

"Well, if you're half a man, you make love—sooner or later. You must be honest or insincere—result, a husband or a blackguard."

"But you're always making love to women!"

"No—excuse me; flirtation is a recognized national institution, or pastime, like cricket."

"Convenient argument, old chap! Then, where do you draw the line between flirting and serious attacks upon the feminine feelings? If you handle the fruit, the owner expects you to buy."

"Well, exactly; flirtation is looking at the fruit—courtship is handling it."

"Oh, I see! Guy Manners, you have an extraordinary attack of near-sightedness often, if I have not been mistaken the few times I have watched you looking at a vegetarian diet in this human Covent Garden! Well, now—let us come to business. What do you say to next Saturday? Come down for the week-end. Then, if you're happy and comfortable, you can stay on. I shall be taking my holiday, so we can have some fun, somehow. There are golf links, a tennis ground and a swimming bath. In the evening, you can play billiards or bridge at the club, if you have the ruling passion hot upon you. There is not much to tempt you in the way of 'fruit'—only kitchen-garden produce. The squire's daughters are of the extreme order of cabbage, and the one female under forty is distinctly broccoli. There is not a single item of temptation within ten miles. However, I forgot; you are coming to study science, and not to practise the arts—your arts, you shocking young flirt!—so it does not matter."

Jamieson emptied his pipe as the clock struck. "I say, by Jove! time's up! I must look after my things. I have to be off in five minutes. Now, then, is that all fixed up? Next Saturday; two-ten from Waterloo."

"I'm your man. Waterloo—most appalling place! I always get lost there; and my luggage disappears, invariably."

"Like marriage, my dear chap, it is a terminus where many, many things are lost."

"Well, you can always change at the junction."

"Don't understand!"

"If marriage is a terminus, divorce is a junction—where you can change if you like—or if you get shunted!"

"Oh, thanks! Well, I'm in a 'through carriage.' But you take my advice—stick to the single line. Ta-ta!" And, like a whirlwind, he was gone, leaving Guy to ruminate on April showers and bachelors, spinsters and their correlatives.

As he arrived at his pretty little Kentish home that evening, Reginald was met at the garden-gate by his wife. Any one, seeing them at this moment, would have envied the fortunate husband of such a charming creature as Mrs. Jamieson seemed to be—and, indeed, was, to tell the truth. Outwardly, she retained all the grace and prettiness that had marked her out on the occasion of the county ball, where first she had met her future lord and master, some seven years ago. Her step was as light as she ran to open the gate for him, as when she had hastened to meet him after their first parting, on returning from their honeymoon. Her smile was as sweet and pure as when she whispered, "Yes," in the stuffy dining-room of a riverside hostelry, late one evening in a hot July. But her heart was not quite as full of unmelted joy as formerly. There were times when her gaiety seemed to be sustained by a conscious effort, and the smile to linger less long about the well-shaped mouth. Not that she had, in losing some of the graceful illusions of early youth, lost any of her love for Reginald. If anything, it had increased, not in breadth, but in depth. With time left to her for many thoughts, much reading and

some quite grave reflections, the head had come to share in the heart's emotions, and the manifold meaning of devotion to one earthly tie had begun to explain itself. But there was something like a want of contentment—a vague, unsatisfied void had crept into her life—a want of something that the affection for husband, children and her home did not explain, nor keep at bay. There is a time in the life of some refined and sensitive natures when, after the glad harvest of romance and the placid, thankful gathering of the fruits of that harvest, the Winter of the heart sets in—not chill, maybe, not biting with any frost of indifference or exhausted heat, but merely a seasonable reaction to the previous sunshine of emotion and desires. It is out of this late Winter, when the feelings are ready to awaken to the reopening Spring of a renewed affection, that the inspiration to arouse romance again can rise.

Rose Jamieson was more romantic now than when she had married. Poetry and Nature had left their messages at the doors of her sensitive temperament; and she was, unconsciously, still looking for the lover in the man she loved. He was devoted, but he was unimaginative; he was conscious only that he possessed and prized the woman who was his wife. The fact that he was dear to her had soothed him, and the habit of complacency had settled down upon him. The roses in the garden were his—and therefore hers; but it did not occur to him that, if he picked one and gave it to her, as though it were the greatest offering he could present, she would be pleased thereby. And, sometimes, when he had kissed her, she had wished that he had only held her hand and pressed it in his, as he used to do, for the sake of the silent message that even a kiss did not always seem to convey so well.

Sometimes, she had tried very hard to do something different from the usual—to awaken his latent feelings by a new way of teasing him or of

trying to clothe her thoughts in new language. But this rather accentuated the omissions than removed the cause of them.

It was an insignificant enough affair—it was no rift within the lute—but it explained her moods, at times, and led her to accept with a keen pleasure words and phrases and small tokens from others, which she would have infinitely preferred to have come from her husband.

"How lovely it is to-night, after the rain, Reggie, isn't it?" she cried, gaily, as he came in through the gate. "What a lot you do lose by being up in town all day. Have you seen anybody interesting?"

"No, darling—no one. I have been in chambers all day, looking over a case. I was obliged to wire you yesterday; I had forgotten I had promised to stay the night with Guy—Guy Manners. He's coming down here, by the way, on Saturday, to visit us. Rum chap, Guy—very old friend of mine. He is coming down to see what marriage is like and take soundings. Guy is indulging one of his temporary fits of girl-worship. If he had stuck to his flat in town, instead of fooling about in a cold, half-furnished cottage, where he feels all the drawbacks of solitude without any of its advantages, he would never have had time to draw imaginary pictures of a happy home. He wants to be comfortable; no doubt, the girl, *this* time, has money; and so he is in that dangerous position in which admiration of a woman, and the allurements of increased income, happen to coincide. Men go into matrimony as they do into politics, to get position or gratify their vanity. Marriage has become the universal rule; it raises the bachelor to an artificial value, costs a lot in wedding presents, and leaves us in a commonplace majority." He lighted a cigarette, and stamped out the burning match.

"My dear Reggie, why this tirade against marriage?" said Rose, laughing, as she stooped to pick up the gray cat as it emerged from the flower border.

"I'm not railing at marriage, but at those who rush at it like people taking a trip abroad, because they are not feeling well, or cannot pay their bills. I'm not one of those who, because he is pleased with a thing, wishes everybody else to like it. People differ. One man's meat is another man's poison; and what would suit me would not suit Guy Manners, necessarily. So choke him off it—if you can."

Rose became a trifle less gay, as she replied: "I see. But, on the other hand, may not your idea of what is good for Mr. Manners and Mr. Manners's notions on the same subject differ somewhat in the matter of what marriage means?"

"Naturally, dear, for poor Guy does not know, and I do."

"Have you invited him, then, down here to convince him that marriage is a failure, or to dazzle him with the hopelessness of attaining to your ideal?" said Rose, looking up, mischievously, from behind pussy's fluffy, gray coat.

"Neither—he asked himself."

"How good of him! I suppose, then, that you mean we are to have a series of matinées and evening performances of domestic assaults-at-arms for his edification? a prolonged matrimonial boxing-match, with slight intervals for refreshment?" she added, with a light inflection of sarcasm in her voice.

"Don't be absurd, Rose. Ah, there's the gong;" and he strode forward a few steps.

"Food for your dinner—for you; and food for reflection for me," she added, though he did not seem to hear.

If the one hungered for his meal, the other was greedy for affection and tokens of the love which, though she well knew, it lay deep in his heart, she yet longed to see expressed in some more demonstrative way.

"The heart of the household is the gong," she said to herself; "when it beats, the response comes quickly; while the human heart, that beats incessantly, is unheard."

Reginald waited for his wife to pass

in at the glass doors of the drawing-room. The light fell pleasantly upon his handsome face, as he pulled off his hat, and pushed back the hair from his forehead, to catch the full evening breeze. She put out her hand, and looked up at him, earnestly and affectionately.

"I don't think we will dress," he said, as he took the proffered hand, much as one might do who was helping the uncertain entry of a passenger into a moving omnibus. "And you look a bit tired," he added.

"Yes, I have had a long day," she said; but her slight sigh was carried away in the rush of wind that came through the open door.

"You used to say the day couldn't be too long! Eh, old girl? Perhaps, you want a little change of air?"

Rose felt as if he were addressing her as a sister or a friend. His formal tone of voice sounded dead in her ears, and the phrase, "old girl," commonplace and unromantic.

It was not change of air she felt she wanted to make the color come back into her cheeks, but change of the mood and manner into which he had dropped, of late.

"No; I will not dress—if you do not care," she said, as she put the gray cat down, caressingly, on the sofa.

Reginald had been eulogistic of her frocks, and she had always taken particular trouble over her toilette of an evening, even when they were alone. But what was the use of that now? He had not even noticed her last gray tea-gown, trimmed with Alençon lace. She recalled a recent evening when his sleeve-links caught in her dress, as she was lighting his cigarette at her bed-candle; how, when the white wisp of tobacco and paper flew out of his fingers on to the carpet, he merely said, "Damn!"

To-night, he fell asleep not long after dinner, for the third time within a fortnight. It was becoming one of the outward signs of this habit of stolid placidity into which he had fallen. She put down her book quietly, and stole gently up to him. Then, she stooped

over him a moment as if to kiss him. But she did not kiss him. She walked slowly back to the sofa, and sat down. Then, she stared vaguely at a big water-color daub painted by her cousin, and listened to the big clock ticking, until an unusually loud grunt from Reginald turned her thoughts toward bed.

II

SATURDAY—that blessed week's-end mirage, when the half-holiday is usually snatched away in struggling with luggage, railway guides, crowded carriages, and all the manifold inconveniences to which an overcivilized system gives rise—at length arrived, and brought Guy Manners to the Kentish cottage, in accordance with Reginald's invitation. He had amused himself during the latter stages of a tiresome, hot journey in that jolting compartment which made reading mere guesswork and slumber an impossibility, by trying to picture to himself what sort of woman Mrs. Jamieson was likely to be. He rather expected the homely-looking *frau* type of woman, or else a thin, formal, punctilious, and perhaps stately, consort with pince-nez. For these were, to his notions, the only alternative elements of copartnership when a man does not talk about his wife, and occasionally wanders into a disquisition on the advantages of remaining single.

Ushered into a pretty garden, with a sloping lawn partly shaded by several clumps of chestnut and walnut trees, beneath which, at one end, were spread two colored rugs, his eyes rested upon a large straw hat appearing above the back of a huge wicker deck-chair, beyond which was the dazzling blur of a white frock and a pair of tiny brown shoes. Beyond was a hammock, from which protruded a dangling leg, an arm, and a briar pipe, emitting a continuous cloud of blue tobacco smoke.

There was no yelping cur to herald a guest's arrival, and the rustle of the parlor-maid's skirts, as she crossed the

lawn, alone broke the peaceful silence of the hot afternoon. The pretty scene struck Guy as quite idyllic, and, momentarily, made him regret that he had not been wise enough to take to himself a wife, a grassy garden and a soft Saturday afternoon in a hammock.

The straw hat turned quickly in the direction of the rustling dress; and, a moment later, Guy was face to face with a sweet-looking woman, and lost in contemplation of a pair of blue-gray eyes which twinkled with intelligent humor as they rested upon him. Then, a soft voice, with a laughing ripple in it, murmured: "How d'you do, Mr. Manners? This is not a very hospitable reception. It looks as though we did not expect our guest, doesn't it? But, like the cattle, we are driven into the shade by the sun and the midges."

"Ah, Guy, my boy, how are you?" shouted Reginald, making the usual abortive effort to disentangle himself from the hammock's embraces. "I did not hear you coming—expect I've been asleep. Brought an evening paper?"

Guy confessed to having left his in the train, and remarked that it had nothing in it of the slightest interest or importance.

"I never saw one yet that had. That is what makes them so restful. But it keeps you going over Sunday—no Sunday papers here, thank heaven!"

"We are old-fashioned and countrified down here, you know, Mr. Manners. We actually go to church——"

"And stay for the sermon, Mrs. Jamieson?"

"Oh, yes; that is—you see, we generally wait for the rector, to bring him back for luncheon."

"Oh, I suppose he has no—family."

"Yes, he has. But he gives his servants a holiday, on the principle of the Sabbath rest."

"And what about his wife?"

Reginald guffawed from the hammock. "Oh! she has a rest all the year round—she's over there in the churchyard."

Guy had already come to the conclusion that blue was the very color for gray eyes, dark eyebrows and a tangled mass of almost black hair, and even pitied the lonely preacher bereft of his wife—that is, if she had been as charming as Mrs. Jamieson.

"Would you rather have a whiskey-and-soda than tea?" queried Rose, as Guy looked abstractedly at her small white fingers, which were skilfully manipulating the tea-pot and glittering silver caddy. Guy was thirsty, but he wished to appear at his best; and he wished nothing better than the beverage brewed for him by this charming creature—so different from what he had imagined.

"You'll see the whole of our society at one go," said Reggie, giving him a cigar, after tea had been disposed of. "The élite of Wissenden have been asked to meet you to-night. Item, the parish priest aforesaid; item, one ravishing spinster of forty-five, who has several teeth left and who will talk to you, if you will let her, about stalactites; item, one doctor's wife, who is deaf one side, so take her in and put her on your right—your right, remember—and who, if she happens to hear anything you remark, will say, 'Go 'long!' and, with a naughty sidelong glance, 'You don't know *me!*' She's quite right; nobody does, but she is a port in a storm."

But Guy felt he did not care, when he found himself tying his best white tie for dinner, who formed the party, so long as he could sit in the sunny smiles of Mrs. Jamieson, who had walked him all around the kitchen-garden, and given him a carnation for his button-hole. He abominated button-holes; but, somehow, he loved that carnation. And, as there were no flowers for anybody else, he was the more pleased with his gift and himself and his hostess.

The dinner was a triumph for Guy. He had put the deaf lady down, in a moment of abstraction, on his left, and found himself occupying the next seat to his hostess, who smiled sweetly, and said, "You are all in your wrong

places, but never mind." And he did not mind, in the least.

The parish priest's conversation lapsed with the entrée; after which, Manners had abandoned his neighbor for good and all. He found he could talk, with unusual ease and upon a variety of new topics, with his hostess. She appeared to him as a lily among thorns.

The dinner, in its way, was, he considered, perfect; and, surely, Reginald might have congratulated her upon it, instead of finding fault with the roast duck in the way he did. On these occasions, a man has nothing to do but to put out the wine, eat and drink. That everything appertaining to servants, cooking and the household should fall on the shoulders of one fragile woman, without sign of sympathy or appreciation being shown to her, was monstrous. Men are unthinking brutes; their wives—*this* wife—the evident type of all misunderstood womanhood—a wounded butterfly with a broken wing. Thus and thus the ruminations of Guy Manners.

Next day, at luncheon, Guy expressed his admiration of the services and the church's architecture; though he would, if questioned, have been a great deal more likely to give definite replies on the subject of Rose's profile and figure than upon the "Transition" window or choral effects. With a thrill of joy, he had shared Rose's prayer-book during the psalms, but it was scarcely a religious emotion that overcame his truthfulness on the questions of the Wissenden ritual and ecclesiastical architecture.

The dinner, next night, seemed to hang fire somewhat, save for a slight fusillade between Reggie and his wife upon the subject of certain defalcations of the under-gardener.

"You never can overlook any fault, my dear; you can't find a better boy, anywhere," triumphantly remarked Rose, at the finish.

"You never can overlook any garden-boys," replied Reggie. "I shall have to keep an eye on them myself in future, that's clear."

Guy wondered how Reggie could be so unpleasant when his wife had a headache. Perhaps, he did not know. Well, she had confided in *him*, at any rate—quite right, too. She wanted sympathy. It was perfectly clear she got but little from her husband. Reggie was too thick-skinned. "He does not see the little things," Rose had remarked to Guy that afternoon, in the garden; and he fancied he detected a slight suggestion beyond the obvious meaning which the remark was intended to convey. It was dawning upon him that there were a lot of points about Reggie that he had never noticed before; points—angles, rather—that were, no doubt, the more accentuated when seen from the true side, the inner life of the domestic circle—though doubtless, of course, thrown into greater relief by the rounded perfection of character in his wife.

"I hope, Guy, you're not thinking of going to-day," said Reggie, on Monday morning. "Take a couple of days off—or, anyway, come down from town early, now the days are getting long, and put in a round of golf before dinner."

Manners accepted, gladly. Work—vulgar, systematic, money-grubbing, tiresome work—compared with the stimulating and elevating contact with a personality such as Rose Jamieson! Bah! the old Epicurean philosophers were right, after all. All ended in smoke. Let us live while we may.

So, several days wore by, broken only, for Guy Manners, by protracted rounds on the golf links, where every bunker meant so many moments less with Rose, and, by Sunday, conscientious misgivings as to his obligation to return to business. Rose evidently appreciated his society, and frequently would take him away from Reggie to walk in the neighboring bosquets, or to help her pick groundsel in the fields for her canaries, whose jubilant caroling defied the onslaughts of her husband. But, on one or two occasions, he rather fancied Reggie looked askance at their walks and talks.

One evening, shortly after, a Miss

Peabody was invited to dinner. She appeared in a fly, mysteriously chaperoned by an elderly maid.

She was, Guy was bound to admit, a striking-looking girl, accomplished and a good conversationalist. But Reggie did not seem to care about sitting separately with her, after dinner, in the garden, but kept returning whenever Guy moved away with his wife.

"She is just your style," was Jamieson's comment to him. "Why don't you make up to her? She has five hundred a year, and a prettier or more lively girl you won't find. She is only in the neighborhood for a short time, too, so you had better begin at once."

But it was useless. Guy could not respond.

The next day was a great one for Guy. He was left alone nearly the whole afternoon with his hostess. Their friendship had ripened apace, and Guy found no pleasure save in her society. It was not good, he found himself thinking, for such a bright flower to be left untended and alone in this solitary but peaceful spot. Why did she not adorn a London drawing-room, instead of being left always in the country by herself? Also, Reggie's manner toward her seemed to indicate an air of mere proprietorship and calm admiration, such as one would bestow upon an old master or a bit of rare china. Why was he so unresponsive—so unappreciative of this bright, fanciful being, who was, in the alertness and vivacity of mind and body, such a charming companion—such an untiring feast for the eyes? Did he, like some Oriental despot, keep her jealously guarded, mindful of her fascinations and her beauty? Then, surely, he might at times be betrayed into showing in some other way than this his appreciation of his treasure! He had been married too long to mind a stranger's eyes seeing his true feelings rise to the surface, occasionally—only bridegrooms a few weeks old assumed a false attitude of callousness toward their wives, in public. No; she was a neglected woman suffering in silence. Love and pity attacked him,

both at once. He fought against overwhelming odds.

It was getting late when they returned to the house after tea, from a stroll over the neighboring common. Apparently, Jamieson was not back. As they passed through the small conservatory leading into the drawing-room, the canaries burst into a wild paean of song, as though their hearts were stirred with joy at the entrance of their mistress. The captive bees, humming overhead, droned out a soft, cello-like accompaniment, and the heavy scent of flowers burdened the air with a delicious fragrance.

"How pleased the canaries seem to see you!" said Guy, as he followed her to the wicker cage.

"Yes, I love them; they are always so happy!"

He watched her as she turned up her face, with its dimpled smiles, and watched the birds fluttering against the bars. How lovely she looked!

"So should any living thing be happy—that belonged to you," he said. He felt his voice tremble, and a cold shiver ran down his back. He picked a geranium, quickly, from a pot that touched his coat.

"Yes, happiness should be mutual," she said, still looking up at her pets, who had forgotten to sing, in their endeavors to get at the morsel of groundsel she had placed between the bars.

"Yes; but is it, always? Sometimes, we feel it is rather a one-sided affair." He felt he did not quite know what he was going to say next.

"Sometimes, yes."

"Ah!" he exclaimed, suddenly losing all control over himself and his words; "you have made my happiness—and I am going to-morrow. Will you take this?" and he pressed the flower, eagerly, into her hand; "and this—ah! Rose—" He placed his arm around her slim waist, and, bending over her shoulder, kissed her cheek. He held her hand, crushing the flower in his eager grasp, and drew her almost roughly into his arms, unresisting, and kissed her half-closed eyes—her mouth—passionately.

She made a sudden effort to free herself. "You must not! Let me go—"

"Dearest, I love you!" and he still held her.

"Enough! enough! you are mad! Let me go! Yes—once more—it was so lovely to be kissed—like that."

It seemed an eternity of paradise for Guy—that moment. Then, suddenly, a noise from the next room! He instinctively started and stepped back, while she stood with closed eyes a moment, as one in a trance. Then, she turned, almost fiercely, upon him. "Go!" she said, half in a whisper, half in a stifled tone of impetuous command. "What was that? Go and see; something has fallen over—probably Minxie." Minxie was the gray cat.

Mechanically, Guy obeyed her request, and entered the room. A small table lay overturned on the floor, close to which lay an open book and an empty tumbler, a pipe just filled and not yet lighted, and a box of matches. The door was ajar.

"I don't see anything or anybody," said Guy, as he replaced the débris.

Just then, the parlor-maid appeared. Rose came in from the conservatory.

"Did you ring, m'm?" she queried.

"No. I don't think any one rang," said Guy, automatically.

A shade passed across Rose's face.

"Has Mr. Jamieson returned? Perhaps, it was the study-bell, Jane."

"Master has been back about a half-hour, m'm."

"Go and ring the dressing-gong, Jane; it is nearly seven."

Rose went to the door, and listened a moment. Then, she left it ajar, and came back and stood by the piano. Guy's brain was hastening to certain inevitable conclusions.

"Mr. Manners," she began, quietly.

"Guy, please—won't you?"

"N-no. I think not. I have never known my husband jealous. I don't know what the effect is likely to be. That he saw us is obvious. That can't be helped. It is unimportant. If he is jealous, it is entirely satisfactory."

"How do you mean—satis——?"

"I mean," she said, coming nearer to him, "that I'm afraid I have been rather a brute to you both—to him, because I wished to make him jealous; to you, because I saw you had got to be—to be fond of me; and, when I should have stopped, I allowed you to go on. I amused you—interested you—attracted you—yes, but now the moment has come when we may begin a friendship—nothing more. I am ashamed of myself—for what I did just now—but you will forget that you, for the moment, forgot yourself. Listen to me: you are Reggie's friend, remember; the friend of the man—my husband—whom I love. And as *my* friend—my new-found friend to whom I can speak frankly"—and she put one hand upon his arm—"I own to you that I was making a slight experiment. Women are always making experiments; they cannot help it. My husband had grown so accustomed to me—to married life in all its moods and phases—he wanted waking up—rousing. He had got into the habit of playing his love-song like a music-box instead of like an orchestra—and I abominate music-boxes and all mechanical things! Now, do you grasp the situation? You were prepared to play into my hands—will you call me hard names for having grasped at the remedy, Guy—my friend?"

He pressed her hand. "I was a fool, I know, but——"

"No. You have done me a good turn. Don't be afraid of any consequences. Now, do me another good turn—go and dress and come down to dinner, looking cheerful. By neither look nor word show any awkwardness, or appear to know that anything whatsoever has happened. I am going to Reggie." She vanished.

Guy kicked Minxie off the hearth-rug, where she had established herself quietly during the interview, and threw himself into the arm-chair.

"Well, I'm blowed!" was his pious utterance.

It took him eight minutes to think,

and sixteen minutes to dress. He arrived in the dining-room, smiling. The dinner seemed an eternity—it might have seemed longer, if such a contradiction in terms be permissible, had not the mysterious Miss Peabody suddenly turned up, in response to Rose's hastily scribbled note to the old people over the way. He blessed Rose's ready tact.

In sheer desperation, Guy flirted laboriously with Miss Peabody until eleven o'clock, much to the delight of Reginald and his wife, whose suppressed merriment was the first new bond of sympathy between them. It was a relief to go into the smoking-room and face things out, fair and square, with his host. He drank off a very tall brandy-and-soda, and lighted a huge cigar, before Reggie appeared in a gorgeous smoking-suit.

"By Jove! Guy, old chap, I believe you're in love once more!"

"Er—Miss Peabody?" said Guy, nervously, gulping down a mouthful of smoke.

"Why, of course—there's nobody else."

"I shall never marry as long as I live," answered the other with conviction.

Reginald laughed a queer laugh—then again, more boisterously. "As long as *I* live, you mean, don't you? Ah, well, never mind! That's the last word on the matter. I say, it has done us both a lot of good—eh? Hasn't it? Now, be honest!"

Guy looked up, caught his friend's eye, and leaped up from his chair; he gripped the other's hand.

"My dear old chap! I'm heartily ashamed; I can hardly look you in the face. I shall never forget—and——"

"Well said. Now, sit down and mix me a drink. Let me see, you leave us to-morrow—eh?"

"You bet!"

"Well, perhaps it's best. Take a month's good, hard work, and then come down and see us again. And now, I want to talk about those shares."

PEDANTIC POLLY

WHEN Polly flirts mit Prinz von Kraut,
 She gives der Prinz a jar,
 By rounding every sentence out
 With her stock phrase, "*Nicht wahr?*"

Monsieur le Comte de Mayonnaise
 Laughs at her jokes—ha, ha!
 Although she tires him with her phrase
 Of query, "*N'est-ce pas?*"

With Captain Bimley-Bumley, whose
 Address is Pimlico,
 She really feels obliged to use
 Her chawming, "Don't you know?"

And yet her secret thoughts are free
 From all pedantic blight;
 For, what she really means is: "See?"
 Or, maybe, "Ain't that right?"

FRANCIS BENEDICT.



IN THESE DAYS

FIRST PLAYWRIGHT—Yes, sir; I put a lot of thought into that play.
 SECOND PLAYWRIGHT—Whose?



THE difficulty with those people who do not know much is that they cannot
 refrain from telling it.



HEADS AND HEARTS

IN spite of swains who sing their woes
 In dismal heart-dismay,
 There's less lorn love than you'd suppose
 In this our world to-day.

We vow, of course, our heart's in shreds;
 With her our joy departs;
 Because so oft we lose our heads,
 And think we've lost our hearts!

THE OTHER MRS. DENNISON

By Robert C. V. Meyers

WHEN Sylvia entered the room, she found her cousin in deep reverie in front of the dressing-glass.

"Good gracious, Claudia!" she said, "you are looking for gray hairs! It is said that when you pull out a gray hair all its relations come to the funeral."

Mrs. Dennison looked at her. She must make a flippant reply, though her heart might be heavy within her.

"Gray hairs," she said, "are not ordinarily in evidence when one is only twenty-four."

"You will be twenty-five the tenth of August," corrected Sylvia, who had the birthdays of the family down to a fine point. She gave a little shriek. "Oh, I know what is the matter with you! This is the twentieth of the month, the anniversary of your wedding. No wonder you look blue! Let us talk of something pleasant. I found the sweetest little book yesterday, golden verses for each day—'We come this way only once, so we might as well make it cheerful for those around us'; and, 'Do something helpful each day, and when we go to bed we'll sleep like tops', and all that sort of thing. The quotations may not be perfectly correct, but that's the meaning of them. So, this is your anniversary! I thought of it the first thing this morning!"

The color mounted to Claudia's face, and on the spur of the moment Sylvia was tempted to say that, if the chance mention of the wedding anniversary of one's self and a husband from whom one is temporarily detached acted like this, she was glad she had never wed.

But she refrained, and entered upon a disquisition concerning some charitable work she thought of taking up. Yet, all the time, she was watching her cousin, and wondering what Claudia's cogitations were on this anniversary of a happy day. For it had been happy, that wedding-day of two years back, and, for a year succeeding it, the Dennison ménage was the gayest of the gay. Then came the quarrel, the subject of which, Sylvia told herself, was Archibald's "carrying on," as she called it, though Claudia refused to divulge a thing to the sympathetic cousin who found out and carried to her everything she heard about Claudia's husband.

Indeed, she was bubbling over with sympathy, when she sprang to her feet with the remark that she knew Claudia would rather be alone on this day of all others, and made an embraceful gesture which her cousin repudiated.

"I forgot!" she cried. "You have not kissed me since Archibald went West. It is too sweet of you for anything! By the way, Tommy Pell told me the other day that Archibald is visiting his brother Harry, who is doing wonderful things at the mines. I don't believe you've kissed a single living soul since Archibald Dennison went away. How perfectly glorious of you!" And, with tears in her eyes for the beauty of the thing, she betook herself from the room.

Claudia's hand was clenched as it rested on the dressing-table. She would have said that for a month she had determined to make no note of the approach of this day, that she was determined not to be aware of its ad-

vent. And here Sylvia had recalled everything to her.

She wondered if Archibald, too, thought of what this day two years ago meant to their lives. That she had heard nothing of him since the time, six months ago, when they had agreed to live apart, was in accordance with her wish as then expressed to him. Six months ago! And Sylvia had frivolously accused her of looking for gray hairs!

For what had she gone to that glass except to regard the reflection of her hard eyes, and mutely to ask herself if this must go on—if she must age before her time, sequester herself from the world, and bear a name that was mockery to her? If she were free, she might face inquisitive looks, and demand a station in society which no act of hers had wrested from her. There were parts of the country where women in her position might go, and, by taking up residence for a stated time, secure a legal freedom with little publicity of procedure.

"I will do it!" she said, bitterly. "I will be his wife no longer. Other women have done as much when they were neglected and deserted, and they have found happiness. Happiness? I am done with it. I want only freedom."

A feverish desire seized her to consult her lawyer at once. Why not put the matter in train on the anniversary of the day on which she had been married? The poetic justice of the thing!

She laughed, mirthlessly, as she undid the ribbon at her neck, preparatory to arranging herself for the street. She donned her walking gown slowly, for she was thinking. Yes, Archibald Dennison despised her; only too willingly he had let her have her way at the time of the separation. She could see him now, flushed and enraged, but holding himself in, letting her do all the talking when she accused him of thinking more of horses and clubs than of his home and her. His silence provoking her, she accused him further, and unfairly, as

she was willing to admit, and he had merely bowed to her, and left the room.

At once, she took her stand, thereafter, refusing to go back from it—the house was hers, her father had given it to her, and she told him as much, perhaps vulgarly. Then, he went West, where his brother Harry was making a fortune, and—

But why think of all this now? Yes, the initial proceedings in the legal separation should be instituted to-day!

She was in the act of extracting her arm from the sleeve of her gown, when the door opened, and Sylvia again presented herself.

"It is dreadful, Claudia!" she said. "There is a girl down-stairs who refuses to send up her name, and insists upon seeing you. I told her you were not at home, but she is the most impertinent and insistent creature—"

"Possibly, you refer to me," here interposed a voice new to the house, and the speaker made her way into the boudoir.

At another time, Claudia might have owned that this was a singularly attractive young woman, clear of eye, and with a coloring which would have gladdened the soul of an artist. But, for the moment, she was too astonished to do more than gaze indignantly at the intruder.

"I hesitated," the newcomer said, "to send up my name, as I might have been told that you were 'out.' My name is the same as yours. I am Mrs. Dennison, number two."

Sylvia, with an exclamation, fell back; then, she flew to Claudia, protectingly.

"Oh," she breathed in her ear, "he has been divorced out there!"

Of course, Claudia saw it. Archibald had done as she had been about to do; he had invoked the aid of the law, and obtained an annulment of his first marriage. This was his present wife. The situation was untenable.

She looked at the girl, who unflinchingly bore the scrutiny.

"Sylvia," she said, "pray leave me alone with this—this——"

The intruder gave her a quick glance.

"—this lady," Claudia concluded.

Sylvia, holding her skirts a little aside from the stranger, backed from the apartment.

When the door closed, and they were alone, Claudia faced her visitor. There was a flash in the girl's blue eyes.

"Sylvia!" she said; "you called her Sylvia! My husband has told me about Sylvia Forsythe, who used to hear weird tales about clubs and things, and bring them to you, so shocked was she; the Miss Forsythe who decided that a wife was neglected and to be pitied who did not have her husband forever dangling around her, the sort of husband who must give up all interest in the world after he has married a wife——"

"May I ask," Claudia interrupted, "to what I am indebted for this call? You are doubtless aware that it is scarcely conventional for one woman to force herself upon the tolerance of another!"

"I believe," the other said, in an equally dangerous tone, "that there is a social covenant to that effect, if I ever thought of it at all."

"Probably," Claudia went on, "you are also aware of the fact that conventionality scarcely approves of the call of a divorced man's wife upon his divorcee, except for the most urgent reason."

The newcomer went crimson; Claudia saw the bright color spread from her throat to the roots of her tawny hair. Then, the flush vanished, and a cheerful expression came to the face of the girl, who seemed not at all angered or resentful, but simply good-natured and nonchalant.

"I suppose it *was* rather rude," she assented, "but I made up my mind to call. I usually do what I make up my mind to do. I wished to see you."

Claudia was incensed. "Why did you wish to see me?" she asked.

The other looked about the room. "Is it conventional," she queried, "to

invite one's callers to sit down?" She sank into a chair. "Oh, thanks! I am very tired."

She unfastened her fluffy wrap with a tiny, gloved hand. "It's like this," she said. "I haven't been married very long, and, being over here, I made up my mind to take an hour off some day, and become acquainted with you. I slipped away to-day; not a soul knew of it. I presume I'm thought to be lost. That's the odd part of you people in the East—you always think strangers are bound to be lost in your cities. I'm not a maverick, as we say out West. But I had to be sly about this visit, for Mr. Dennison would never have let me come." She rested her elbow on the arm of her chair, her chin on her hand, and contemplated Claudia.

"Do you know," she said, "I am more interested in you than in any other woman in the world?"

Claudia, standing like a statue, well understood this from her own growing interest in her visitor, and was rapidly losing the confused feeling that had at first oppressed her.

"What a charming room this is!" the girl was saying. "That picture over there is a Fortuny. Isn't it nice and gloomy? We have a picture at home of a litter of puppies drowning, while their mother, chained to the floating dog-house, cannot go to their rescue. It is a sin to paint a cruel picture, wicked to employ art for such a purpose. Papa bought it while I was at my last term in school. I mean to destroy it when I reach home. I left school only a year ago. I had to go home, and take papa in charge; he was just running wild, and sending to Paris for all sorts of duds for me, till Doucet must have thought I was twins."

More and more, Claudia felt that she was mastering the situation. Archibald Dennison's new wife was a specific for much of the pain and sorrow she had undergone in the past months; she was so crude, even vulgar, so different from him, so far removed from everything to which he had been accustomed. It was a revenge, a sweet revenge.

She let the girl ramble on, almost ob-

livious to what she said, busied with herself and the accentuation of the revenge which would be consummated when Archibald Dennison learned of this morning call, which he never would have sanctioned.

"But now we will come to business," summed up the new Mrs. Dennison, with abrupt distinctness, after she had admired a palm in a corner, and deprecated a priceless prayer-mat. "What I want to know is, what are a husband's leading traits?"

Claudia involuntarily started.

"I can understand what *your* traits are," the girl proceeded. "You are refined, though emotional, resenting any infringement on your prerogatives, making mountains out of mole-hills, if you will let me say so. I am from a part of the world where they make mole-hills out of mountains—in mining, you know. That's what papa is, a miner—one of the new kind, not a left-over. He owns two holes in the ground. One of them is named after me; consequently, I claim a percentage of all the silver that's found. Never let your name go by default, you know. We're all so busy out there! I believe I could 'promote', myself. I shouldn't have married Mr. Dennison if he hadn't gone into business. If you can't be good, be busy, you know. If you haven't any good, tiresome business, you have too much time in which to be bad or unhappy. That's what's the matter with you; you've had so much idle time that you've grown foolish and unhappy."

Claudia flushed angrily at this open criticism.

"My name is Maymye," pursued the other, "two y's instead of i's. The girls changed it for me in school; they said it was the elegant, new way—y's for i's, you know. Try to call me by it; don't call me Mrs. Dennison—it sounds so formal. And we oughtn't to be formal, ought we? We're sort of relations. I suppose Sylvia Forsythe is a sort of relation, too, now, a cousin by marriage, once removed. I should think she's just the kind of person to make you quite in love with the

world. There are plenty like her; we had one at school, always telling you what people said about you, and doing it because she liked you so much, and hated to see you imposed upon. It was real sweet of her. I wish Cousin Sylvia hadn't come on the anniversary of your wedding, though; I wanted to be your first visitor that day."

It was simply insufferable to Claudia, and yet she made no outcry; it was as though she were fascinated, held by a spell.

"But I haven't got down to business yet," Maymye went on. "I may say I know very little about husbands—I have been married such a short time. It is when we women marry that we get to real human propositions. Now, ought I to insist upon my husband's going out with me night after night to parties and things, even when he has had a hard business deal, and wants to go among men, and brag about it, or hear suggestions which will lead to other deals? Should I tell him that h-o-r-s-e spells sin and low life, and that the turf and athletics are not only degenerating, but are positively beastly for married men? Ought I to command him to upset his temperamental leanings for me, to see atrocities in things which, before I put in an appearance, were the natural outcome of his proclivities? Ought I not rather wait till his affection for me makes him see the fallacy of a good deal that used to form his sum of life? Ought I to look at myself, and ask if I, too, haven't some things to correct in my make-up which may not fit in the grooves of his liking? Ought I—? But won't you sit down? You must be tired; though, maybe, you look better standing; you tall women often do. As for me, I am at my best when I am snuggled up on a couch with my feet tucked under me. And—oh, yes, I want to know if I must object, on general principles, to men's clubs? Isn't that a little old-fashioned and silly? Don't you think it is rather manly for a man to meet men on their own ground? For men are not quite the same to one another when women are about; we

women demand too much of their attention. Sylvia Forsythe helped to settle all these things for you, I know, but I wish you would be as good to me as she has been to you. We women, unless we are taught, are only on the ragged edge of things, sometimes. And, then, I want to know if you ever cared for your husband? If you did not, you can tell me how I may prevent Mr. Dennison's taking unfair advantage of me if the occasion should ever arise and— But your manner tells me you never cared for Archibald; you cared more for yourself, or you wouldn't have elevated the mole-hills. Of course, you'll excuse me if I become in any way personal, and you will check me in time, won't you? I don't suppose you ever did care for him, or you wouldn't have let him go out of your life so easily. It's the best thing, though, if you don't love a person, to let him go. I am so happy myself that I can scarcely realize unhappiness as something that cannot often be warded off by a little self-sacrifice; for so much unhappiness, it seems to me, is only an exaltation of one's self in one's own estimation. Yet, if Mr. Dennison ever displeases me, I suppose I ought simply to become, as Miss Forsythe said—divorced."

Claudia could not have moved. A horror swooped down upon her when the girl thus probed her heart. That the young thing was happy, she did not doubt, but she could not believe her heartless; there was a quality in her that surely evinced some depth of feeling. The girl's next words confirmed this supposition.

"You poor thing!" she said; "you don't know how sorry I am for you. How could you marry without love? 'Love endureth all things,' and you refused to endure even a little bit. 'Love suffereth all things,' and you declined to suffer at all. Do you appreciate the wrong of such a marriage? Do you appreciate the grief of it to such a man as Archibald Dennison?"

Then, Claudia found her voice; the accusation was too flagrant, the pity for her too humiliating.

"Who dares to say I did not love him?" she demanded. "I refuse your sympathy; your criticism is uncalled for. And do you believe that Archibald Dennison cared anything for me when he could so readily separate himself from me?"

The other Mrs. Dennison looked into her eyes. "He loved you from his soul," she said. "I believe he loves you still."

Claudia sprang forward. "And, knowing this, you married him?" she cried.

For a moment, the other seemed lost; then, she laughed, lightly.

"I was bound to marry the man I loved," she answered. "And happy! I am so happy that I kiss everybody I know."

"And I have kissed no one," Claudia burst out, "since I sent my husband from me! My lips cherished his last kiss. I did not treat him fairly, I confess that, for the first time—and to you. But he has cruelly wronged me in retaliation for that, and you have wronged me most of all in coming to me on this day, the anniversary of my marriage. Unacknowledged to myself, even, I have hoped that he would come back to me, and forgive me. Instead of this, he has treated me outrageously—outrageously!"

She was panting, holding her hands over her heart in a very helpless fashion, indeed.

"Would you," the other asked, ruthlessly, "have forgiven him had he come?"

"No!" cried Claudia; "I should not. But I would now, I would now! Oh, girl—woman—he *does* love me! he loves me still! I should die but for that knowledge."

Her limbs failed her, and she sank to the floor, her hands covering her face.

Claudia never rightfully knew what she said after that, save that her words incriminated herself, and she accused her hardness of heart. The situation had complete control of her; she was in the abandon of recklessness.

She came to herself only when a

sharp cry rang through the room. The girl stood in a far corner, terror in her face.

Claudia rose to her feet. "What have I said?" she gasped. She caught at the back of a chair to steady herself. "Forgive me! Why did you come here? Go! I have been raving. There was little truth in what I said. I was going to apply for a legal separation to-day. He loves you. Go to him!"

"Hush!" Maymye said. "I did not think it would be like this. I never meant to hurt you so." There was a sob in her voice. "I felt sure you loved him, even when he told me you did not. I forced him to see that he was still dear to you. I was so happy that I felt the Lord would like me to make another woman as happy as I. That is why I came to you. I hardly knew what to say when I got here, but your cousin gave me the cue when she accused Archibald of getting a divorce. Do I look like a woman who would marry a man who loved some one else? Hark! they have

come for me; don't you hear them?" She ran to Claudia, and caught her by the arm. "They have thought I was lost, and, as the last resource, have come to look for me here. I threatened to go to you, and, when Archibald told me at breakfast that to-day was the anniversary of his marriage, that decided it. They are on the stairs—they are at the door! Don't tell them you were thinking of a divorce! Don't tell them of your mistake about me! For I am *Harry* Dennison's wife, married last month. I made him bring me to New York; I made his brother Archibald come along. They——"

The door opened, after a series of unheeded knocks. "Harry, I am here! Archibald Dennison, hold Claudia—hold her tight! She has never kissed any one since you went away! She loves you, she loves you! She's too good for you! Harry!"

And, as Archibald Dennison caught Claudia in his arms, his brother's wife fainted—for the first time in her life.



LOSS

MY life and I have grown so strangely tired!
 We falter, now, before a little thing;
 While, other days, the greater task would bring
 With it the greater strength that it required.
 The dreams that thrilled of old, the hopes that fired,
 Are turned to ashes, fading, darkening;
 And the old songs that we were wont to sing
 Gone with the old desires that we desired.

Ah, heaven is darker for a fallen star;
 Earth mourns the drooping of a flower's grace;
 Ocean is poorer for a pearl the less;
 And we—my life and I—how deeper far
 Our sorrow, with the passing of a face
 That made the sum of all our happiness!

NANNIE BYRD TURNER.



YOUTH affects skepticism; old age realizes it.

A MOTHER-IN-LAW

By Elizabeth Knight Tompkins

NORMAN INNIS was glad when he heard that his mother-in-law was coming to visit his home at last, certain though he was that he should not like her; for he was a man to whom the doing of a fitting thing appealed, whom the leaving of it undone disturbed. He had realized the necessity of Gertrude's being married from her uncle's house in San Francisco, their home at Santa Barbara being let, and Mrs. Page herself in New York; but the excuse that Mrs. Page had sent at the last minute for her absence from the wedding had seemed inadequate. It was fitting that a mother should be present at the wedding of her only child; it was a hundred times more fitting that she should wish to be there.

Mrs. Page's actions had been so unexplainable that Norman found himself puzzling over them to an extent that irritated him. It was not right for a man to spend so much time thinking about his mother-in-law's character. The most perplexing intricacy was that Mrs. Page had been a most devoted mother during Gertrude's childhood. He had heard it from other people, as well as from Gertrude. The indifference which he criticized so severely had not appeared until after Gertrude's return from a New York school, ready to be introduced to their small social world.

Once accepting her willingness to be absent from the wedding, there was, in his eyes, nothing strange in Mrs. Page's spending several years abroad; but, having returned home, her first duty was to travel the short three hundred miles that separated her from

Gertrude, or, at least, to express a wish that Gertrude should come to her. On the contrary, she had snubbed Gertrude's offer of a visit by a letter most shocking to his sense of the fitness of things, which it annoyed Norman to have called conventionality.

"You know you don't wish to come, so why should you?" Mrs. Page had written. "Santa Barbara is at its dullest. You would hate it more than ever. Nobody is even making calls. You would be bored to death, and I should have you on my mind. Wait, and a little later I'll come to San Francisco. I shall have to go up for some clothes—I look as if I came out of the ark—and I long to see the babies."

Mrs. Page had sent many affectionate messages, but her indifference about making the acquaintance of her grandchildren, little two-year-old Page, and Ruth, her baby namesake, had been, perhaps, the most unnatural feature of all. This letter offended Norman's taste; it showed too great a disregard for the accepted fictions of life.

His first theory about the mystery had been that his mother-in-law was unwilling to step down and yield place and admirers—she was said to have many—to her beautiful daughter. Of late years, he had come to think that he was mistaken. He still believed that her indifference to the children was due to a dislike, natural in so young a woman, at finding herself a grandmother.

His preoccupation with the subject led him to introduce it one evening

when Gertrude was yawning through the after-dinner hour before she took herself and her novel to bed. Norman's books were, as usual, spread out on the library-table before him, but he had not yet opened them. As they left the dining-room, Gertrude had been speaking of her mother and of her own return from school, and his question came as a natural result of her words.

"Was she cross to you?" he asked. The crudity of his question offended him, but the things he wanted to know were so subtle that any wording of them conveying sense to his wife's mind could not fail to be crude.

"Oh, no! She used often to scold me before I went away to school, and try to make me read and do things; but, after I came home, she didn't any more; somehow, she didn't seem to care as much. Emily Lewis said once that she didn't think mother liked to have a grown-up daughter better looking than she was. That was merely what Emily said," Gertrude interposed, apologetically; "but mother wasn't a bit that kind, and I told Emily so. I know that wasn't it, though I never felt that she liked to have me around very well."

"What do you think it was, then?" Norman asked.

This unusual interest in her opinions set his wife's tongue going even faster than usual. Generally, in spite of the unvarying politeness of his replies, she was conscious that his mind wandered, unless she confined her talk to the daily nursery chronicle. He always gave his undivided attention when she talked of Page or little Ruth.

"Well, you see, mother's so awfully clever, and she wanted me to care about books, and to go to college, and all that sort of thing. And yet, when I came out," Gertrude became animated, "I had lots more attention than the clever girls whom she wanted me to be like, and then she stopped trying to make me do things. I suppose she had been afraid that men wouldn't find me interesting, and

when she saw they did she ceased to care. I often told her that none of the nicest girls at school was going to college, only the ones that nobody had ever heard of. It was the fashion at one time for girls to go to college, but it isn't now, and mother doesn't know. You see, she was buried down at Santa Barbara, seeing only a few people like Robert Meredith, all the time I was at school in New York and in the midst of everything. Why, the sister of one of the girls married an English baronet—Ethel Archer, you know."

"What sort of things did your mother wish you to do?" interposed Norman, as Gertrude paused for breath. He had heard about Ethel Archer's sister so many times before, and did not want to hear about the photographs of her English homes, which invariably came next in the recital. He was still seeking for light on his mother-in-law's character, though realizing that it was in a quarter from which light seldom came.

"Oh, things like taking an interest in the garden, and taking long walks over the hills and on the beach, and studying German and things. And she never liked my dressing up and making calls, though everybody did it."

"That was strange. I wonder why?" commented Norman.

His interest inspired Gertrude to a fresh mental effort.

"I think, somehow, she imagined it was nicer not to like teas and calls and going to luncheon-parties and that sort of thing. Mother always had such queer ideas. She said I took my social duties too seriously. Oh, dear! I think it is so much nicer to be like other people, and not so superior. I always used to wish that mother was like Aunt Kate. She is really interested in all the things Katrina is. She is just like a sister to her, and yet she is a great deal older than my mother. Do you know that mother isn't forty yet? She was married so young!" Norman was always polite,

so he said, "Really!" in as astonished a tone as if he had not heard the fact a hundred times before. Gertrude was very proud of her mother's youth. She continued: "And Aunt Kate likes to go out with Katrina, and they sit and sew and talk everything over together, while mother hates to sit and talk. It makes her so cross when people come to see us and stay a long time, especially when they talk about other people."

"Doesn't she like to talk with any one?" Norman asked, guiltily conscious that he was trying to lead the conversation in a certain direction.

"Oh, yes! She loves to talk with Robert Meredith and Ralph King, and a few people like that. She and Mr. Meredith talk for hours at a time."

"What do they talk about?" Norman asked, with interest, stimulated by his success.

"Oh, all sorts of things: their gardens, and the mountains, and the ocean, and Greek, and trees, and plays, and places they've been to, and music, and how they felt about life when they were younger, and marriage, and the education of children, and books and pictures, and all sorts of things." Gertrude paused, out of breath, having run off the list as if it were something she had learned by heart.

"Do you like Robert Meredith?" her husband inquired.

Gertrude was visibly flattered by his interest.

"Why, yes. Everybody likes him. You do yourself, don't you? He's so kind and nice, and sometimes, when mother used to be impatient with me, he'd take my part. But he always treats me like a little girl, and I know he and mother used to want to tell me to run away and play when I came where they were."

Norman hesitated before he asked his next question. He did not wish to put ideas into Gertrude's head, but his interest in the subject got the better of his discretion.

"Do you think Meredith and your mother care for each other?" The belief that they did was the explana-

tion that now appealed to him as most probable. Gertrude did not seem surprised. Evidently, the idea was not new to her.

"Oh, I don't know," she said, slowly. "You see, he's been an invalid ever since he came to Santa Barbara, and now they say he can't live much longer; somebody was telling me only the other day, his heart trouble is much worse. Besides, there's his wife, you know."

"I know," he answered, opening the book before him. Plainly, there was no light to be gained from Gertrude. Gertrude would have liked to talk longer, but experience had taught her the futility of trying to force her husband's mood.

Poor Gertrude! It was hard that she should have escaped from a superior mother into the arms of a superior husband. However, she had still the hope that her children would not be superior.

After she had gone, Norman no longer made a pretense of study, but lighted a cigarette, and sat gazing into the fire, pondering the problem that had grown to possess such a fascination for him. He had long suspected that gossip was right when it attached an especial significance to the relations between Robert Meredith and his mother-in-law, and that the cause of her neglect of her daughter lay in those relations. This theory explained the facts that had puzzled him. However emancipated a woman might be, she would shrink from bringing her young daughter into contact with the irregularities of her own life. She might excuse her conduct, but an instinctive feeling of unworthiness would lead her to draw back from intercourse.

Norman himself, for the greater part of his life, had liked and admired Robert Meredith, and had more than once been brought face to face with the fact that he was a man whom women loved. On the other hand, he did not believe Mrs. Page to be a woman whom a man of personal consequence would really love—not even

Meredith, whose ideas about women were so totally different from his own.

They had threshed out the question more than once in the days before Meredith's health failed, and he went South to live. Meredith had been full of the subject, for his matrimonial difficulties were then approaching a crisis. It was evidently a relief to discuss in the abstract the troubles that he was too much a man to specify in the concrete. He was always carefully impersonal, but the personal winged his words as he tried in vain to combat Norman's prejudices. At last, he gave up the attempt. Norman saw him the week before he left San Francisco, and Meredith's final words lingered in his mind.

"I see there is nothing for it but to let you learn by experience. Pray God you may not come to say, 'I could forgive her getting drunk if she only had a mind.'" That was eight years ago, and, although the two men had met sometimes in the interim, the conversation had never been renewed.

Norman went over this old ground as he sat there by the fire. For some reason, his old beliefs had lost their fervor.

It was with a good deal of curiosity that he let himself into the house on the evening of his mother-in-law's arrival, and went up-stairs for his usual visit to the children. They were asleep, however, so he dressed and went down to the drawing-room. He had stipulated to Gertrude that his library should not be the common sitting-room during her mother's visit.

He found his wife and his mother-in-law sitting in opposite corners of a gilt sofa covered with old-rose brocade, under a blaze of light from the high chandelier. This room had been his boyhood's ideal of magnificence, and, although its splendor no longer pleased him, the Scotch thrift in him, that no apparent lavishness of expenditure ever quite uprooted, kept him from yielding to Gertrude's desire to have the room done over. He never told—nothing could have made

him tell—but he knew exactly what the old brocade cost a yard, and it was as fresh as the day it was installed as a surprise to his mother on a return from a visit over twenty years before. Gertrude had submitted. In that respect, she was indeed the ideal wife. You could not make her anything that she was not, but you could always silence her on a particular subject.

It was probably because he had heard so much of the excessive youthfulness of his mother-in-law's appearance that she appeared to him even older than her scant forty years. The brown of her hair was still bright, and her face unlined, but her expression was not young, and her brown eyes had a tired appearance. Her figure was, however, slender and youthful.

"Here is mother, Norman," said Gertrude, as he appeared in the doorway.

Mrs. Page rose, and held out her hand. "Well?" she said, with a little smile that lighted up all her face.

Norman was not usually playful, but this smile inspired him to reply:

"Well, mama?"

They all laughed.

"That's not half so appalling as 'Grandmother,'" she replied, lightly.

"We have been trying to teach Page to say 'Granny'," explained Gertrude.

"He gets it 'Banny'," added her mother.

"He went to mother right away, but Ruth hasn't any use for her," said Gertrude.

Thanks to this happy beginning, dinner went off very well. Gertrude chattered away about Page and the baby, and, as the subject appealed strongly to the other two, they listened with interest. Norman was surprised to find that his mother-in-law talked very little. He had believed that her type of woman talked incessantly.

After dinner, when they were seated around the fire in the ornamental, unattractive grate in the drawing-room, the conversation dragged. Gertrude, who, out of politeness, was sitting up past her usual bedtime, became very

sleepy, and stifled her yawns with difficulty. Norman was homesick for his library, but his sense of the fitting would not let him seclude himself on the first evening. His martyrdom did not last long. Mrs. Page soon announced herself ready for bed. She had not slept on the train the night before, and was very tired.

He gave a sigh of relief when he reached his beloved library where, night after night, he escaped from the world of business wherein he dwelt by day, from the world of trivialities in which alone he could meet his wife, to the world of books that he loved. He did not think of his mother-in-law to-night; the reality had banished the apparition. Once, indeed, he found himself wondering at her indifference, but as soon as he opened his Greek books he forgot everything in the intricacies of the language that he was teaching himself, as he had taught himself Latin and the higher mathematics. His father had believed that much education unfitted a man for business, and had refused to let Norman go to college. "If a man who can read can't educate himself, an education won't do him much good," the rigid old Scotchman used to say.

The next evening, when Norman came home and went up to the nursery, he found the door ajar. The only light in the room was from a bright wood fire, in front of which his mother-in-law was sitting with Page on her lap, his little brown head against her breast. She was singing "Mother Goose" to him under her breath. She stopped when she saw Norman at the door, but a little, sleepy, peremptory voice said:

"More, Banny, more!" Mrs. Page held up her hand warningly, and went on with "Little Bo-Peep."

"He's most asleep,
Don't wake him up,"

she improvised, and then finished the verse in the orthodox fashion:

"And dreamt she hear'd them bleating;
But when she awoke 'twas all a joke,
Alas for the vision so fleeting!"

Norman stole in, and sat down opposite his mother-in-law. The picture across the fire appealed to him. The traces of time were no longer visible in Mrs. Page's face. They had yielded to a good night's rest—or was it the dim light? At all events, the look of youth of which Gertrude boasted was there. She was well dressed, too, in a street gown of gray homespun. Norman had not fancied the gown she had worn the previous evening. It had suggested a provincial dressmaker to his critical eye. They sat there in the firelight in silence, even after the singing stopped, and the child's regular breathing showed that he had passed the Rubicon into dreamland.

The silence pleased Norman. The ability to hold her tongue had come to seem to him a positive virtue in a woman. He was tired of protecting his mental privacy with a book or a pretense of work. There was no awkwardness in the silence. Whatever Mrs. Page's thoughts might be, they were evidently interesting to her. At last, Norman held his watch toward her. There was light enough for her to see that it lacked only twenty minutes to dinner-time. She rose hastily, and was about to carry Page to his crib, but Norman held out his arms for the child, and took him from her. For a moment, they stood together looking at his rosy little face; then, Mrs. Page stooped and kissed his dimpled fist.

"Oh, I do love him so, already!" she whispered, with an abandonment that surprised Norman. He had believed that the truly modern woman did not possess deep feelings. "Do you suppose it is just the grandmotherly instinct?" she asked. A sensation of pleasure at the intimacy of her tone came to him. And, yet, he had been intending to keep his mother-in-law at a distance. Before he could answer, the nurse appeared in the doorway, and Mrs. Page left the room.

After dinner, Norman went to his library. Presently, he heard Gertrude go up-stairs to bed. Had she left her

mother in the dining-room? he wondered. Was she trying to read by the light of the high chandelier? These thoughts intruded themselves between himself and his books. At length, he arose with a sigh of impatience, and went down the hall to the dining-room. Mrs. Page was sitting in a small, gilt chair with her feet on the rungs of another directly in the middle of the room, under the chandelier. She looked up when Norman entered.

"Do come into the library," he said. "How can you stand this awful room? I am going to have it done over. I didn't realize how appalling it was till we sat here last night."

"It certainly isn't cozy," Mrs. Page answered, with a smile; "and the light is bad for reading. But are you sure I shall not—? But I won't make you tell a lie," she broke off, leaving her question unfinished. "No, don't protest now. Later on, if you like. Lots of things are not so bad as we think they are going to be."

Once established in front of the fire in the cozy library, it was two hours before either of them spoke. Norman had forgotten that he was not alone, in the obscurities of a new author entirely too hard for him. At last, he gave a sigh. One passage puzzled him, hopelessly.

"What is it?" asked Mrs. Page.

"I can't make out what this confounded old fellow is driving at."

Mrs. Page came over to the table. "Let me see. Greek, isn't it? Perhaps, I can help you. What is the difficulty?"

Certrude had often boasted of her mother's mastery of Greek, but Norman had taken it to mean that she could puzzle out Homer with a lexicon. It had been his experience that mastery in a woman meant a smattering in a man.

"I can't find any of the forms."

"Have you read anything in the *Æolic* dialect before?"

"Nothing, save one little bit of Sappho."

"Ah, that is your trouble, then. You have been taking accusatives for

datives, and haven't recognized your infinitives. See here." She explained the forms clearly and concisely. In five minutes, all his difficulties had vanished.

"How well you know it!" he exclaimed, with admiration.

"I have had a good master. Robert Meredith and I have read Greek together for years." Norman's friendliness disappeared at these words, although it was Meredith who had inspired him to learn Greek. It offended him that she could mention the man in that casual way.

"I am very much obliged to you," he remarked, stiffly.

It grew to be a regular custom that Norman and his mother-in-law should spend their evenings together in the library. He had planned to refuse politely her expected offer to help him with his Greek—he did not care to have Meredith's lessons passed on to him—but, to his surprise, the offer was not made. The next evening, Mrs. Page settled down with her book as silently as the evening before. This indifference to his companionship piqued Norman, and, on the third evening, without intending it, he found himself asking her help. After that, they read together every evening—read and talked, the talk gradually gaining on the reading. Try as he would to conceal his feelings, Norman could not help stiffening at Meredith's name. Mrs. Page soon stopped referring to him.

She had been with them three weeks, and they had had nineteen happy evenings together. It had rained incessantly, one southeast storm crowding upon the heels of another. Norman came home very early one afternoon. Business was dull, and he had heard that the surf at the beach was extraordinarily fine. He would suggest that they go out to see it.

He let himself into the house, and started for the library to leave some papers. The door was partly open, and he heard voices. In front of the wide window that overlooked the Golden Gate stood his mother-in-law.

Robert Meredith was facing her. He had taken her hands in his, and Norman heard these words:

"I simply couldn't stand it any longer without you. I had to come. Oh, Ruth, I have missed you so!" The woman he called Ruth raised her eyes. They met Norman's as he was turning away. His feet made no noise on the thick carpet, and Meredith did not turn around.

Two hours later, at his usual time, Norman came home to dinner. He wanted to stay away and dine at his club, but, for once, something in him was stronger than his will. Perhaps, she would explain.

The evening began as so many others had. Gertrude went to bed. But Mrs. Page did not come over to the table. She took up her book, as she had done on the first of those nineteen evenings. Norman sat holding his volume, acutely miserable. He did not see a word before him, although he turned leaves mechanically, and even pretended to consult his lexicon. Thoughts such as he had never thought, feelings such as he had never felt, were upsetting the beliefs of a lifetime. Presently, he was conscious that Mrs. Page had turned her chair to face him.

"Norman," she began. Her voice was cool but not unfriendly. "What is it that you believe about Robert Meredith and me?"

The blood rushed to his face. He found himself blushing like a school-girl. He could not find a word to say.

"Is it that you think he is my lover?" she continued, as calmly as if she had asked him if he found the room too warm.

Norman pulled himself together. "And isn't he?" he demanded, boldly.

Mrs. Page did not answer.

"I wish you would tell me what made you believe this. Did any one tell you so?" she asked, instead.

Norman was not a coward. He had the courage of his beliefs. The suddenness of her attack had startled him out of his self-possession, but

now he was his cool, well-poised self again.

"I have heard a rumor or two to that effect," he replied, "but I do not think they have influenced me. To tell the truth, I haven't been able to account for your attitude to Gertrude in any other way. It seems hardly natural for a mother to take so little interest in her only daughter, her only child; and Gertrude told me that the change came suddenly. It seems as if something else that was all-absorbing must have come into your life. I have also thought that you might feel that you were doing her a wrong. It isn't as if you were a woman of slight feeling. The instinct of motherhood, at all events, is strong in you. No one who has seen you with Page and the baby could doubt it," he added. Mrs. Page was silent, ominously silent, Norman thought. She rose, and stood by the fire. Norman followed her. He took her hand in his.

"Tell me the truth," he begged. "Tell me even that he is not your lover, and I will believe you. I am longing to believe you."

"If I say he is not, what becomes of your theory? How will you explain my unnatural conduct?" she asked, with a poor attempt at lightness.

"You will explain that, too," he declared, with authority.

Mrs. Page shook her head as she drew her hand away. "I cannot see that I owe any explanation to you."

"And yet you yourself invited it," he remarked.

"True, but I have changed my mind. I will tell you nothing. I shall go home to-morrow." She left the room as she spoke. Norman started after her, but turned at the foot of the stairs. Instead, he took his hat and overcoat, and went out into the street.

It was a raw, dark night, smelling of rain, but not actually raining. He wandered up and down for a long time, a tumult within him such as he had never felt in all his well-ordered, limited life. He was beginning to

realize that there were forces in the world which he had not taken into account. He was unused to such intensity of feeling, and rebelled against the pain. At last, he found himself in the neighborhood of his club. He had had no idea that he had wandered so far. He felt thirsty. He would go in, and have a drink and a smoke.

The club was nearly deserted, but through the open library door he saw Meredith sitting at a little table, reading. He would have escaped if he could, but Meredith had seen him.

"I wanted to see you. Come in here. There is no one in here," Meredith said, leading the way to a small room beyond the library.

"What is it?" Norman demanded, without any preliminaries.

"See here," Meredith began, at once; "Mrs. Page told me something this afternoon. She told me what she thought you believed about her relations with me."

"And isn't it true?" Norman asked, calmly.

"No; it's a damned lie."

"Ah!" exclaimed Norman. "I haven't wanted to believe it," he added, in a conciliatory tone.

"Come and sit down," Meredith said, peremptorily. "Look at me," he ordered. "What do you see? Do you think a woman could love that—a man with one foot in the grave, and four toes of the other?"

"But you were not always so," protested Norman.

"Ever since she has known me. No, man; she has felt pity, affection, motherly love for me, but never the thing I have craved, the one, unmistakable thing. But, if she had, I'll be damned if she would have let the world stand in her way! That is the kind of woman she is!" he declared, proudly.

"I should think she would have cared," Norman said, gently.

There was still something extremely attractive to him about this man, even now when his life was so nearly done. Meredith's burst of feeling was over. He settled down in his cor-

ner of the divan, and sighed, wearily. Evidently, his vehemence had exhausted him.

"There is more woman than angel in her—likewise a dash of the devil," he put in, parenthetically, "and that particular combination demands virility, physical force. She could mother a wreck like me, yearn over me, wear herself out waiting on me, and shed tears over my grave; but love me—never! You're the man that ought to have loved her, Norman Innis. I have always thought that. But you were too big a fool—not quite so big a one as you used to be, I take it, though?"

"I hope not," Norman answered, with an echo of the other's sigh.

Meredith broke the pause that followed.

"See here, Norman. We've been friends for twenty years, and I am so little in this world, that for all practical purposes I'm out of it. Tell me the truth. No one minds having told things to dead people." He paused, and then asked, in a low voice: "Wouldn't you rather she got drunk?" Norman's eyes had been looking everywhere but at his companion, but now he brought them back. The eyes of the two men met.

"Heaven help me, I believe I would!" he exclaimed, fervently.

He left the room without another word. His whole being was filled with the desire to see his mother-in-law, and to ask her forgiveness. At all events, he could write her a note, and tell her she must not go home until he had seen her.

He opened the library door, and instead of the emptiness he expected, he saw before him the woman with whom his thoughts were filled. She was sitting in her usual seat by the fire, without even the pretense of a book. She turned her eyes as the door opened, and looked at Norman without speaking a word. He came up back of her chair, and stood between her and the hearth.

"I am so sorry! Oh, I am so sorry!" he said, in a low voice. No

one who had known Norman Innis all his life would have recognized him now. He did not know himself. This woman divined the truth, after her usual fashion.

"You saw Robert," she asserted.

"Yes. Can you forgive me?" he asked.

"I have not blamed you. It was natural for you to think what you did. The truth is too unnatural. But, Norman, I must tell you. You must not think me other than I am. If things had been different—if I had cared, and if it hadn't been for Gertrude, I might have done it. But it would not have been fair to Gertrude," she added.

"Tell me about yourself and Gertrude," he demanded. There was that mastery in his tone that few women can resist. This woman evidently found it hard. She hesitated.

"I meant never to tell you, but I don't know that it matters, now I see that you know—I mean, that you have no illusions." She paused.

"Tell me," Norman persisted. "I cannot stand this suspense."

She looked up at him, and smiled. "Why, Norman, you are actually nervous—as nervous as a woman!"

"I am," he admitted, laying his head on his arms, which rested on the mantel-shelf. She rose and stood beside him, but did not touch him.

"I will tell you the truth," she said. "It is not to my credit. What has come between me and Gertrude is simply the fact that she bores me to extinction." She paused, and then continued: "I was always hopeful so long as she was a little girl. It was childishness, girlishness. All young girls are bores, more or less. She would grow out of it. She would learn to talk less of herself, and, when she began to have ideas, she would be more reticent. When she came home from school, I had to face the truth. Such as she was, she was a finished product. She would always be trivial, small-minded. She would continue to pour forth a stream of egotistical commonplaces to her dying

day. I couldn't stand the idea. You see, her father before her bored me so that I hated life. His nature was as small as hers. I fell in love with him for his beauty, but my love died inch by inch." Norman said nothing. He did not even lift his head. After a pause, she went on with more abandonment. Evidently, it was a great relief to her to let herself go.

"I suppose I am a wicked woman. Don't fancy that I excuse myself. Gertrude has always been a good daughter to me. What kind of a woman is it that finds her child an intolerable burden because she has not a soul above gossip and fancy-work and afternoon teas? I have often said to myself, 'Suppose she drank or was dissolute?' But it has done no good. I can't help it. I fought the thing for years, but it grew stronger than I. The relief of having her away at school was so tremendous that I never could get myself into harness again." Norman was silent. "Tell me that you have realized all this about Gertrude—tell me," she repeated, in a tone of tremendous entreaty.

He lifted his face, and looked at her. "Yes; I knew it before we had been married a week. You see, I had never known the other kind of woman, and I had prejudices. I was brought up at home, and my father and mother were very old-fashioned. I never had a chance to learn better things." His tone was humble and inexpressibly touching.

"Oh, what a wrong I have done you!" his companion exclaimed. "And you don't know it was I. Listen to me. I had always known about you from Robert, about your beliefs, and what a fine fellow you were in spite of them; and the idea of your marrying Gertrude took possession of me. It haunted me until I actually went East, and sent her to her uncle's. I knew that you were often at the house with Clarence, and it seemed to me that she was just made for a man who didn't want a companion. And it came about so quickly that I could not believe it true. I danced

with joy when I heard that you really wanted to marry her."

"Oh!" Norman exclaimed, reproachfully.

"How could I know?" she demanded. "I believed in your ideas. It was an unaccountable taste, but I thought you knew what you wanted. Nevertheless, I trembled until you were actually married. I was so afraid you might be thrown in contact with one of the other kind of women. And I was afraid to come to see you, for I knew that I could be all things to a man, not merely his housekeeper and the mother of his children. And once a man has really known, has been held worthy of the intimacy of a woman who can give mind and soul, as well as body, he can't go back and be satisfied with anything less. A man who has it in him to appreciate a consort can never put up with a slave."

Norman raised his head. "And I thought I knew it all!" he said, with a smile that was as a burst of tears.

"Listen to me," she said. "There are many men who think as you do, but they are usually men whose own intelligence is limited. You see, the trouble is that lack of brains is a positive quality; it isn't the mere being without. A woman who is stupid is not simply not clever. Instead of being silent, she says foolish things; instead of no ideas, she has perverse, irritating ones; instead of being merely not a companion, she is a thorn in the flesh. Her lack of intelligence does not make her passive; the prejudices of a stupid woman are colossal, and it is impossible to overcome them. A man says that he wants a woman merely to bear his children, and order his household; but, after the children are brought into the world, what then? He can't prevent a stupid woman from dosing and disciplining them after the fashion of stupidity? But you are

not listening to me," she broke off, abruptly.

"Oh, I know it all so well!" he answered. "I was thinking of you, and remembering that you are going home to-morrow." They looked at each other for a minute; then, he straightened himself. "Tell me what I am to do," he said.

"I don't need to tell you. You are a strong man—the strongest I have ever known," she added.

"And the quality you like best in a man?" he asked.

"Is strength."

"Then, if I—" He paused, and did not finish his question.

She answered it, however. "Yes," she said, simply; "but that is not for us to think of now. You may not believe it, but my daughter's happiness is dear to me. Oh, how I could love her if she didn't bore me so!" she broke off, with a laugh that was half a sob. "Every detail of her beauty is a delight to me. At least, you will have that to enjoy." There was some bitterness in her tone, but she checked herself, and said, in a different manner: "I know that you will do your duty. You do not need any advice from me who have done mine so poorly. But, Norman——"

"Yes," he said.

"Promise me one thing."

"Anything."

"Promise me that little Ruth shall have a chance to learn something better than she will learn at home. Perhaps, she will not take the chance, but give it to her."

"She shall come to you," he said. "We shall not see each other in the future, you and I, but you shall teach my children whatever they will learn."

"Thank you," she said. "And, now, good night and good-bye." And she left him standing there by the fire.



THE only item that some husbands and wives have in common is their name.

SOIR D'AMOUR

Par Le Vicomte J. de Beaufort

MON aimée, écoutons sur les harpes du soir
Frémir le vent léger, dont la caresse passe
A travers l'ombre, où seuls nous venons nous asseoir,
Les yeux ravis devant l'azur du vaste espace.
Une musique chante en nous l'adieu du jour,
L'harmonieux soupir du crépuscule achève
Le murmure que met sur tes lèvres ton rêve,
Et le silence enfin nous berce avec amour,
Baignant ton front d'une clarté de pâle étoile,
Légère comme une aube et douce comme un voile. . . .

Rêvons d'amour et de beauté!
Les chansons des oiseaux sont douces,
Et le feuillage clair lentement agité
S'incline en frissonnant vers le frisson des mousses.

L'azur limpide a des reflets
De pourpre et de moire vermeille,
Et le soleil, à l'horizon lointain, sommeille
Comme un prince de conte au fond d'un beau palais.

C'est pour toi, mon aimée, et c'est pour notre joie,
Que tant de volupté s'alanguit sur les fleurs,
Que le cœur entr'ouvert des corolles se ploie
Jusqu'au bord de tes mains, y prenant leurs pâleurs
D'ivoire et des parfums d'une essence plus fine.

C'est pour toi que le ciel, d'une splendeur divine,
Fait rayonner l'instant suprême du couchant,
Et qu'un reflet de nuit mêle à ta chevelure
Cette sombre clarté qu'allume, en la touchant,
Le rayon d'une étoile en l'ombre à peine obscure. . . .

Rêvons d'amour, rêvons d'amour,
Tant qu'est belle la Terre
Et que nos yeux, ouverts au sublime Mystère,
Entrevoient l'autre ciel d'un merveilleux séjour!

Tant que se tait la voix des villes,
Tant que l'extase d'un moment
Prolonge autour de nous d'ineffables idylles,
Rêvons d'amour, ô mon Aimée, en nous aimant!

C'est maintenant qu'un peu de l'éternelle vie
 Remet son souvenir en notre âme infinie,
 Et que le Dieu très bon, si souvent offensé,
 Veut qu'à travers l'amour, nous trouvions sa promesse,
 Et l'espoir d'être plus qu'humain, et la jeunesse
 Du bel Eden, où la première idylle a commencé!
 C'est maintenant que tout est beau dans la lumière,
 Puisque les astres sont à nos pieds, et nos yeux
 Eclairés d'un regard qui dépasse les cieux,
 Et que la terre n'entend plus notre prière. . . .



ENCOURAGING

HE—If I stole a kiss, would it be petty larceny?
 SHE—I think it would be grand.



FIRST NEW YORKER—What has become of Delancey? I haven't seen him for an age.
 SECOND NEW YORKER—Oh, he was run over by a street-car in Philadelphia.
 FIRST NEW YORKER—What a disgrace!



UNVEILED

DEATH came to her in such a sad disguise—
 With somber form and heavy, hidden face,
 As one who came, unknowing love or grace,
 To seize upon the poor soul, tyrant-wise.
 She looked on him with tears and frightened sighs,
 And shuddered, trembling from his close embrace,
 When, lo! he lifted for a moment's space
 The veil, and bared his features to her eyes.

But what she saw there—ah, we may not know;
 Only, we felt a great peace conquer fear;
 Only, her eyes grew bright that had been dim;
 Only, she laughed, a little laugh and low;
 And, looking as on one her heart held dear,
 Smiled, and stretched out her weary arms to him.

JOHN WINWOOD.

A LESSON FROM THE CLASSICS

By Nora Vynne

MR. AND MRS. DAVID SENHOUSE were both young, but Mr. Senhouse was the younger of the two; this was the more unfortunate, as Mrs. Senhouse had £5,000 a year, and Mr. Senhouse had nothing but a few college debts and the elements of a profession—he was reading for the Bar.

To make things worse, while David Senhouse was openly, conspicuously and gorgeously handsome, his wife had never been noticed for her looks—by the majority, that is to say.

There were a few exceptional men, and, for that matter, a few exceptional women, David among the former, to whom every line of her face and figure was just what it should be, a continual source of content. But even these had not been attracted by her appearance at the first. They were people who had passed the initial stage of acquaintanceship, and, finding her an interesting companion, had liked her better as intimacy deepened, and, finally, through some accident of becoming clothes, or becoming circumstances, had been amazed to find that at last she was beautiful to them.

It must be owned that in the past Mrs. Senhouse had seldom been becomingly dressed, and then only by chance. She had not always been rich, and had not had the gift of dressing well on nothing by instinct, nor the interest in clothes to achieve the same end by study. She had always been rated among the plain and shabby, and “unsmart” by the majority, and, even now, when her good fortune enabled her to put herself in the hands

of genius as regards “maiding” and dressmaking, the average acquaintance would only say, “How well that girl looks to-night!” in a tone of resentful astonishment, as if the good looks could have been obtained only by trick or accident.

Mr. and Mrs. Senhouse were openly and unreservedly happy. Perhaps, when the millennium comes, it will be possible for women to see each other happy without resenting it; but there are no signs of the approach of the millennium as yet. The spite of a plain woman, when a pretty woman is preferred to her, is as nothing to the spite of a brainless, pretty woman when a plain woman—that is to say, one whom she rates as plain—is preferred to her. There seems to her no reason or sense in such a thing. She is convinced that a mistake has been made, and is anxious, if not to set it right, at least to point it out.

David Senhouse's good looks made him appear a suitable object of sympathy for a great many pretty and silly women. His wife did not know it, but, almost since the day of their marriage, he had never been allowed to forget that he was young and poor and one of the handsomest men in London, and that his wife was older than he, and plain and rich; that is to say, these assertions were constantly put before him. In so far as they regarded his wife's appearance, they were harmless. She was the woman he loved; therefore, she was beautiful. But the imputation as to her wealth and his poverty rankled, for these things were true; they were horrible—and they were true. The

reserve of youth and the reserve of his nature prevented his pointing out that he had loved Mary when she had not a penny, that he had been willing, had been eager, to marry on nothing a year and no prospects, and that then it had been Mary who held back for his sake. His way was to preserve a dignified calm under such imputations, and then show his indifference to the money he was young enough and healthy enough to enjoy immensely, by grumbling at the dinner, and affecting indifference to his wife. An open show of affection for her would have put an end to all annoyance once and for all, for women, even envious and spiteful women, know real love when they see it; but David was not sufficiently a man of the world to realize this; it seemed to him that such show of affection would be taken for hypocrisy, would be an insult to his wife, and a degradation of their love. As for any danger of estranging his wife, he never dreamed of it. That other women should think he did not love her did not matter. That she should think so was impossible. He did not even consider the matter. This was why Mr. and Mrs. Senhouse quarreled at dinner.

Edward Russell was present. He often was. He was a friend to both, and the only person who knew, and was really sorry, that these two foolish people were in danger of drifting apart.

The quarrel was all about nothing. The first cause was that David had been irritated and pin-pricked and rubbed the wrong way all the afternoon by a silly woman, who imagined she was flattering and consoling him; and Mary, to show that she was not jealous of her—that is to say, in proof that she was—insisted on bringing her to the house. There was a salmi of grouse, and it was over-seasoned, and David had a great deal to say on the subject, with a restrained manner that suggested that he would have said much more had a visitor not been present.

If Mary had been wise, she would have cried, visitor or no visitor, and

David, seeing his power to grieve her, would have realized the absurdity of grieving her because a spiteful person had irritated him. But the worst of it was that she was not a bit wiser than he; in spite of her few years' seniority, she was even younger in knowledge of the world than her husband, and did not in the least know how to manage a boy; therefore, she laughed at him, and called him a "sybarite."

David did not understand exactly what a sybarite was, and lost his temper. "I don't know what you mean," he said; "the thing's beastly, and I've said so. I've been content with a leg of mutton and an apple dumpling before now, and I could be again. I'd like it better than stewed pepper and spice."

There was an aggravating unbelief in Mary's laugh. "Let's give all the money to a hospital, and live on a hundred a year," she said, "and see how you like it."

Her laugh sounded very mocking to her husband, but Edward Russell heard a different note in it. David said a wicked word, and set down his wine-glass with a crash that snapped it.

"What, you, too!" he cried. "If ever you taunt me with your money again, I swear I'll leave you."

Mary went as white as a sheet, and dropped into dead silence. David, just to show that he was master in the house, and to prevent any one thinking that he was in the least ashamed of himself, went on grumbling at his dinner. When, in a quiet voice, and with a palpably forced gaiety, Mary began to join in the conversation again, he thought the quarrel was quite over, and looked relieved. Edward Russell knew better, and was not in the least surprised when, dinner being ended, Mary stood a moment after rising, collected herself, and then spoke to her husband.

"It's horrid to quarrel before visitors, David, but what you said before Mr. Russell I must answer before him. I'm as incapable of—what you said—as I should be of suspecting that you would taunt me if the money were

yours. I'm not proud of my money. I was very proud that, when I hadn't a penny, and we were just engaged, you spent all the pennies you had on the engagement ring." The fingers of her right hand closed on the ring as she spoke, and her voice quivered a little, but she went on, firmly: "That's to defend myself from a charge I don't deserve. As for the other thing you said—that's between you and me. You will find a note in your dressing-room."

She walked swiftly and steadily to the door. David stared after her, his anger flaming up the more on account of his previous idea that peace was made, and because of the fact that he did not in the least know what was the matter.

"And your door locked, I suppose," he stormed; "if it is, I'll smash it open."

The butler appeared with cigarettes; there was a short silence.

Then, Edward Russell looked up, and said, with an air of intelligent curiosity: "What I want to know is why on earth you didn't say that while your wife was in the room."

"Say what?"

"That you'd smash her door in."

David blushed. "Because I'm not quite a brute, I suppose," he said; "only two-thirds of one."

"Ah, that's a pity. It's always best to be thorough."

"I don't know what you mean," said David. "I was rude. I don't see that I'd have bettered things by being ruder. I'm glad she said what she did, because she said it better than I could have done. Of course, she would want to set herself right to you."

Edward Russell took another cigarette with an air of impatience. "She didn't care twopence-halfpenny what I thought of her."

"Then why—why—?" David was seriously puzzled.

"There was something that I might have thought of you."

"I don't care in the least what you think."

"Well, she does." And Edward Russell smoked reflectively. David smoked with an air of indifference.

"Well, what was it, Russell?" he said, sullenly.

"I was to know—even at the cost of a scene and an embarrassing confidence—I was to know that, whatever your feelings now, when she had no money you were somewhat eager to marry her."

"She can't doubt my feelings now." The words found an amazed exclamation.

Edward Russell did not speak.

David's face took the look of one thrown suddenly into retrospection. "Eager? Great Scott! I'd have sold my shirt to buy the wedding-ring."

Russell smoked on. David came back from his retrospect with the manner of one resolved not to own to anything in the way of emotion before his guest, but he said, with an air of polite attention:

"You hadn't finished, had you?"

Russell looked questioningly toward the claret.

"What you had to say, I meant," said David.

"Confound you! I thought I had," cried Russell; "but, if you think I hadn't, I'll go on. I saw the fair Cynthia annoying you this afternoon. I know the tone she takes in speaking of you both to others, so we should be able to deduce the tone she takes with you, Senhouse."

Again, young Senhouse had the manner of one resolutely withholding the impression being made on him. He spoke as if collecting evidence.

"She shouldn't be disturbed for one moment by that spiteful little fool."

"I didn't say that she should be. I only inferred that she was, probably. Women are women—not men."

Edward Russell had a way of giving his platitudes with an ingenuous air of self-ridicule which invariably made his friends feel as if they had themselves originated them, and therefore they were never resented.

David said, "Of course," as if he were merely continuing his own sentence.

"I mean that the opinions and bearing of women to women are every bit as important to women as the opinions and bearing of men toward men are to men."

David's face said, "I didn't know I had acted in a way to make women sneer at my wife." It was a good deal for a face to say, but it said it, distinctly. Aloud, he said:

"And you recommend smashing doors and things! I don't think much of you, Russell."

"Only when she is behind the door."

For a moment, it seemed as if David would have to ask outright for the enlightenment he wanted, but Edward Russell was very good-natured.

"Know the story of Alcibiades and Phila?" he asked.

"No," said David, regretfully. "I don't know much of that sort of thing. She does; she likes it. I didn't bring much from Oxford except debts and a rug or two. I wish I had."

"Oh, it's only Plutarch," said Russell, "the resource of people who haven't been educated—at least, so your wife says. She told this story. It was before she met you. Alcibiades neglected his wife."

"Oh, rot!" said David.

"The parallel doesn't begin yet," said Russell. "He had married her to please his father, and he behaved pretty well to her, but she thought herself slighted. The parallel hasn't begun yet."

David grunted.

"Phila publicly left his house, with much indignation. The law required that she should make her application for divorce publicly to the magistrate. Alcibiades heard what she was doing, intercepted her in the street, and took her in his arms, and carried her home again."

"Well?"

"Well, she stayed. That was all."

"There isn't any parallel," said David. "Any more claret? No? Then, shall we go up-stairs?"

"If you don't mind, I'll try to catch the ten-thirty train," said Russell.

"No, you don't, old man," said

David, firmly. "You're coming up-stairs. If I was a fool before you, I've got to say so before you. I'm sorry if you don't like it, but you *would* interfere. You're the crowd in the street, you know."

When they reached the drawing-room, Mary had disappeared.

"Wait a minute," said David, cheerfully, and went up-stairs to his wife's room. It was empty. He went to his own, and looked for the note she had promised.

There it was, square and white and threatening. He took it up with something very like fear, and opened it.

DEAR DAVID:

You have said what I can't forgive. I thought that we were married because you wanted it, not because I did. I would not have married any man that ever lived for any other reason, not if I had been dying for love of him. If you have changed, I'm sorry, but I won't be wife to a man who stays with me as a concession, and thinks of parting as a threat to hold over me, not as a grief to himself. If I cannot be wife to a man who wants me more than he wants anything else in the world, I'll live alone. I'll not give rise to more talk and gossip about it than I can help, and I shall write when I have made my plans.

This was a thunder clap. Gone! how, and where? The ten-thirty train? He could overtake her, if he set out at once. She would have counted on the chance of that, and chosen another way. He put the letter back on the dressing-table, went into his wife's room, and rang the bell.

Mrs. Senhouse's maid appeared.

"Where's your mistress, Parker?" he asked, carelessly.

"She left a note for you on your table, sir."

"Wait a minute," said David.

He went into his room, and came back reading the note. He spoke with a little irritation.

"But how on earth am I to join her when she hasn't told me where she has gone?" he said.

"Dear me, sir," said Parker, "how unfortunate; she didn't tell me. She only said she was going for a moon-light bicycle ride."

"Well, I must just follow the tracks.

Tell them to see that my tires are all right."

And David had changed his clothes, and was in the hall within five minutes.

There were only two ways Mary could have gone—toward town, or toward the sea coast; either was a reasonable destination. Town was nearer, but the ten-thirty train would overtake her on her way. She would choose the sea coast. As he expected, the tracks turned seaward.

Mary was riding at a good pace. The night was gorgeous. She felt the sense of exhilaration the open air of night gives the superior animals, such as horses and men and women of spirit. Excitement is in itself a pleasure, whatever be the cause of it. The faint whisper that was the sound her well-kept machine gave was the only thing that broke the stillness. She had passed no one but a policeman or two and a few belated cyclers going homeward. They emphasized, rather than lessened, the delicious loneliness. She spun with motionless pedals down the hill. A bell rang behind her; she swerved to the left. The next moment, a firm hand was on her left shoulder, and her husband's voice said, cheerfully:

"Just in time to help you up the Hog's Back. Hand on my shoulder, please, or we shall be lopsided. No, don't do that," as she tried to move from under his hand, "or we shall both be in the ditch."

"Let go, then."

"No, I don't mind the ditch, if you don't. I say, don't, old girl; you'll waste all our impetus, and we'll both have to wheel up the hill. Ah, that's right. We can argue at the top."

They swept up the hill in silence; it was a long time before they had to pedal. When they had, Mary took it easily from force of habit. She was used to being helped up the hills. David was a little breathless when they reached the top.

They were through the Hindhead now, and the wide, undulating moorland lay before them. She scarcely

noticed, but the instinct to balance well had carried her hand to David's right shoulder.

"Lovely night," said David, at last. "Let's get off and look at the stars."

"No."

"All right."

Another mile or two, of quiet motion, fragrant heather, gleaming moonlight and sharply defined shadows.

"Where are we going?" asked David.

"I don't know."

"But you must know where you were going."

"I know where I was going. I do not know where you are going."

"Oh, that's an easy one. I am going where you are."

"No, I think not."

"I don't quite see how you are going to prevent it, you know."

She did not speak.

"You might spill us both into a ditch—but I should still be with you."

She did not answer.

"You might give me in charge to the next policeman we meet. But he mightn't take me as a gift."

"There is no need to be absurd."

"No, but there is a temptation. The air is so bracing. You might tell me where you are going."

Far off, a dark shadow, mounted higher than the light of a cyclist, and without a lamp, showed on the white road.

"Here is a policeman. Are you going to try giving me in charge? I may as well tell you that I shall say that you are my wife, and not sober, and that I am taking you home."

"I am scarcely in the mood for jesting."

"You ought to be. Do you mean to say that this ride is not raising your spirits, and you going so well, too? I wonder if the bobby would have made you ride along a chalk line? I say, let's try if we can. There's powdered chalk in our repair boxes."

There was a little uncertainty in Senhouse's voice.

"We couldn't see a chalk line on a chalk road."

"No more we could, of course. How

much further are we going? You might as well tell me, because I shall know when we get there."

"I wish to go alone."

"You can't very well be going to Portsmouth, because you'd get there at about two in the morning, and no one would take you in. Indeed, I don't suppose any one will at this hour. I think I shall just turn you around at the next cross-roads, and take you home."

"I should not go."

"You need not. I said I should take you."

"There'd be an undignified fight then, and two spoiled bicycles."

"The fight won't last long, and I'll look out for the cycles."

She flung her hand from his shoulder with a force that, for a moment, seemed to part them, for his hold on her shoulder lessened; but, the next moment, his hands were on her handle-bars. She could not steer an inch. She stopped pedaling. That made no difference. She was quite helpless, for he had possession of both brakes. They swept around in a wide circle at the cross-roads, and the homeward journey was begun.

But Mary was no meek Phila; her defeat strengthened her determination. She loosened her useless hold of the handle-bars. Her husband, sure of victory, did not notice that she raised her hands to her head.

The next moment, she leaned forward, stretching her hand far over the handle-bars. There was a sharp swish. David felt her bicycle drag more and more heavily, and knew what had happened. He loosened his hold, and stopped his own machine.

"You'd better dismount. You've beaten me this round," he said, cheerfully. "It would take twenty minutes to mend it, and goodness knows where you might get to while I did it. But I don't give in. I'm going with you. Which way is it to be?"

She took hold of her bicycle, turned it, and began to walk onward again. He also turned, and they went along the road, a few feet apart.

"Shall I wheel that for you?" he asked, presently.

"No, thank you."

"You may as well tell me now where you are going."

"There's a little inn at the other side, about four hundred yards further on. You know it. It stands far back from the road."

"It'll be shut."

"Yes, but I told the landlady once, when I had a puncture at Uxbridge, and it was dark and I was frightened, how none of the inns would take me in because I was a woman, and alone. And she said that such a thing was a disgrace to England, and that she would get up at any hour of the night for a lady in difficulties."

"And you are going to take her at her word?"

"Yes; I brought a strong hat-pin on purpose."

They walked on in silence, for about ten minutes. Then, the little inn, shadowy among the shadows of the trees, came in sight. Mary stopped.

"That inn!" exclaimed David; "I remember it. It is the inn where we— Did you come here for that, dear?"

"Yes; I wanted to remember that evening."

"What a day we had! And what a tea we ate! We didn't think we should ever quarrel then, did we?"

"Oh, yes. I knew that very likely we should quarrel now and again."

"You mean there's something specially bad in this particular quarrel?"

"We will discuss it, later."

"Right. What we want now is supper and bed. Here we are. Will you awaken the old lady, or shall I?"

"You had better leave me first."

"But I am staying, too. I thought you understood that. Oh, yes, I am. Where's that hat-pin? Give it to me, at once. What's yours is mine. There are two punctures now, and two distressed travelers."

He hammered at the door. A female head, picturesque in the moonlight, in gray hair and a night-cap, appeared at the window, inquiring who was there.

"We are," said David. "Let us in, and you'll remember us. We had tea here last year, and a thundering good tea you gave us. We are married now. But we've punctured our tires, and can't get home. You told my wife then, you know, that you'd always get up in the middle of the night for a lady in difficulties."

"Mercy on me, so I did! I remember well enough, too. Married! Well, I guessed it was that way, and my best wishes to you, and it's a mercy I've got a bit of ham in the house. Just wait a bit, and I'll come down."

"Dear old soul! Now, I wonder which of us it was made the case so plain to her last year?"

"I do not care if it was I. Why should I have minded loving you, or showing that I loved you, when you'd done your best to make me? But, you read my letter?"

"Yes, dear. I was sorry."

"I don't want pity."

"Sorry for myself for being such an ass. But I think the whole fact of the matter was that I was too modest. I think so much of you that I did not suppose what I said was very important. And—and it isn't. You took me for better or worse, and you've got to keep me. Now that I know how I hurt you, I hope I sha'n't hurt you again. But, if I do, you must bear it, for I'm not going to let you go. You must make the best of me. Be fair, Mary. I never said I *wasn't* a fool, did I?"

Mary's firm dignity gave way, and she broke into a laugh.

"Oh, David, you are delicious!" she said.

"I don't know about that," said David. "But I'm all the husband you've got, and all the husband you're going to have. And, if I vex you, you just pitch into me, and, if I'm wrong,

I'll say I'm sorry, and I won't care who hears me."

"I don't want you to say anything but one thing," said Mary.

"Well—what's that?"

"Oh, nothing. You have said it plainly enough. Here's the old woman." There was a sound of drawn bolts, and a glimmer of light, and the door opened.

"Am I to come in?" said David.

"The point was," Mary said, demurely, "that I said you should not."

"And that I came in spite of it. I understand. Now," turning to the old woman, "you said something about ham and eggs, I think."

"And cider," said the old woman, beaming at them with the love of all motherly old women for happy lovers. "And it won't be more than ten minutes."

It was not. And the two welcomed the barbaric repast with appetites engendered by thirty miles of frosty moonlight. They had reached the stage of bread and honey before Mary suddenly asked:

"And what did you do with Edward Russell?"

"I left him in the drawing-room. I told him to wait till I fetched you, and made it up. I did not know it would take as long as this."

"What had he to do with us?"

"I'd said things before him."

"David!" She turned a flushed face to her husband. "David, as if people mattered when we understand!"

"Poor old 'crowd'! I hope he's gone comfortably to bed, though," David murmured.

His wife scarcely heard these words, and, if she had done so, was far too happy to feel curious as to their meaning.



"THAT fellow has a cast in his eye."
"That is because he is a theatrical-manager."

TAKE HANDS AND PART WITH LAUGHTER

THIS is the night that we part forever,
 Thou and I, whom the gods are mocking!
 Here, in the crowd of the careless-hearted,
 Our two hands will touch for a moment,
 Our two mouths, that burn for each other,
 Murmuring worldly words we mean not.

Why are thine eyes so sad, Belovèd?
 Why are thy lips so white and silent?
 Hear how my laugh rings clear, and see me
 Throned as queen of the merry-makers!
 Laugh—for the pain of my soul's despairing!
 Love is too awful for aught but laughter.

ELSA BARKER.



THE CONDOR AND THE SPARROW

A CONDOR stood in the great cage at the Bronx Zoölogical Gardens, and with the dignity of a Malvolio he spread his massive wings that he might be admired of the populace.

It so happened that a perky little sparrow had entered the cage, and he ventured to address the condor.

"Ain't you afraid that your wings will freeze that way? I never stretch my wings unless I am flying. If you don't move, people will think you are stuffed."

At these impudent remarks, the condor was much incensed. "Do you not know," said he, "that I can fly up into the sky until I look as small as you are all the time, and I can then drop like a plummet upon my prey miles below me? I am the most admired of all the birds in this cage, for I am the strongest and the biggest; while as for you, why, I don't even remember to have seen you before, and it is not at all likely that those on the outside ever notice you." And the great condor slowly folded his wings, let his head hang limp for a moment, and then straightened it up, and viewed the sparrow with fine scorn.

But the sparrow was pugnacious by heredity, and, although he could not fight so big a bird as the condor, he did not propose to be silenced by him.

"It is true that I am small," said he, "and it is true that no visitors admire me, but in this life there are compensations for everything. If you had not been so large, you would not have been captured to form Exhibit A of this collection; while, if you were as small as I, you would go out into the great wide world—even as I am about to do."

So saying, the sparrow flew between the bars of the cage, and was soon lost to sight in the mazes of the wood.

CHARLES BATTELL LOOMIS.

THE MERCENARY

GO, Marigold, poor flower that caught
My lady's fancy for a day,
And ask her if in vain I've sought
To teach her love, as she has taught
A score of hearts to own her sway.

Tell her the passion of my thought;
Tell her that for her "Yes!" I pray;
Oh, bring not back unwelcome "Nay!"
Go, Marigold.

She flings you by, since I have naught
But love wherewith for love to pay!
Ah, lady, if it must be bought—
Your heart so curiously wrought—
With Mammon's coin, I can but say:
"Go, marry gold!"

L. T. NEWCROSS.



THE WAY OF THE WORLD

VAN ZANDT—Why did you think that Jones was dead?
VAN ZOOKS—I heard him praised so highly.



HUSBAND—If I can't get home from the office to-night, I'll send you a telegram.

WIFE—I may not be here to receive it; you'd better give it to me now.



NO PROBLEM

"THE play was bad, wasn't it?"
"Yes; positively decent!"



THE dark horse is the nightmare of political candidates.

WELL-WARRANTED OBFUSCATION

"IF nothing prevents, I expect they'll decide to take me to the asylum, along about the last of the week," pessimistically said the proprietor of the corner grocery at Allegash, addressing the baking-powder drummer, for whom he had formed something of a liking.

"You see, I went over into the adjoining state, for a couple of weeks, to help collect my half-sister Georgiana's second husband—who got considerably pulled to pieces by the picker in the twine-mill to which he was attaching a labor-saving improvement that he had invented—and to help settle up the loose ends of his affairs; and I got my niece, Daysey Mayme Snoddy—who has been away to boarding-school, and is cultured and romantic, and all such as that—to keep the books here for me during my absence.

"Well, in the first place, she used this fashionable handwriting that looks like a string of fine-tooth combs with three-sixteenths of their fangs knocked out; and then she worked on the pages of my account-books in the up-to-date manner in which educated girls turn the pages when they write letters—the fourth page first, then the second, next the first, and lastly the third. Then, to fill my cup of befuddlement full, she used her refined ideas on the spelling of a good many of the names, and put Smith as 'Smythe,' Link Brown as 'Launcelot Browne,' Perry Fifer as 'Perrhyn Phypherre,' and Jim Jones as 'Jaymes Joughnes;' and to spill considerable of it over into the saucer, as it were, when she didn't happen to know the customer's name, she just jotted down his most prominent peculiarity, and let it go at that. Thus, we have a ghrynde-stone charged to a phlegmatic man whose hair had been cut with the sheep-shears; two dozen clothespins to the talkative old lady with a wart right here; a plug of tobacco to a lame man, and so forth; together with several items against the professor, the deacon, and the nice-looking stranger who said he'd be around to pay the last of next week. Besides all this, she scented the whole store with heliotrope, made eyes at the clerk till he doesn't know yet whether he's a-foot or on horse-back, and scornfully declined to have any axle-grease, yellow calico, or hog-cholera medicine sold at all.

"My eyesight ain't what it used to be; that little clerk had indigestion, anyhow. There are in the surrounding region about sixty different sorts of professors; at least thirty deacons so close-fisted that they are not in the least likely to pay anything they don't have to; goodness knows how many nice-looking strangers; folks that patronize sheep-shears; lame men; and worthy old ladies with warts; and any self-respecting Jones would fight me for calling him 'Joughnes.' In consequence of all of which, when I look at the books one way, I don't know but I've become a millionaire in two short weeks, and, when I look at them the other way, I'm dead sure I am going over the last hill to the poorhouse. Day before yesterday seems like to-morrow to me, to-day is last Friday, and right now is week after next. I am continually putting things in my mouth, mistaking it for my watch-pocket; and, at times, I wake up in the night with the impression that I am my own stepson.

"All in all, I can't see anything but the asylum ahead of me. If they do the square thing by me there, they'll put me in cell 13, and give me a collection of foreign postage-stamps to assort and paste in a book. Come around and see me; I don't think I'll be dangerous, and I guess likely I'll be highly amusing."

TOM P. MORGAN.